

THE LIFE  
OF A FOX



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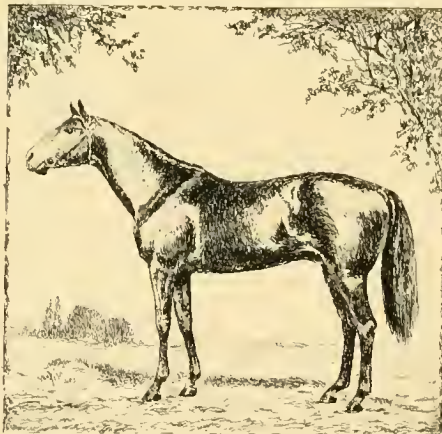


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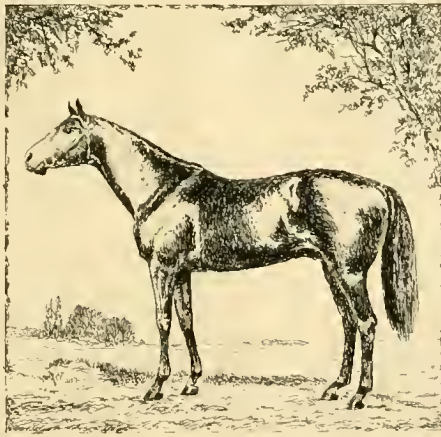
JOHN P. GRIER

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# THE LIFE OF A FOX



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HUNTSMAN AND HOUNDS. BY J. A. WHEELER.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*



# THE LIFE OF A FOX

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

BY

THOMAS SMITH, Esq.

Late Master of the Craven Hounds, and at present of the  
Pytchley, Northamptonshire

A NEW EDITION WITH COLOURED PLATES AFTER  
H. ALKEN AND OTHERS

AND AN INTRODUCTION BY  
LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

LONDON  
EDWARD ARNOLD

1920

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## INTRODUCTION

BY

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE

No Master of Foxhounds, alive or dead, has a greater right to be heard than Mr. Thomas Smith. "The proof of the pudding is in the eating," and though it is not altogether true that the proof of the ability to show sport is the number of Foxes' noses on the kennel door, the fact that Mr. Smith killed ninety Foxes in ninety-one days' hunting in a Country which has no great reputation as a seenting country, is a piece of evidence in favour of his knowledge of woodcraft, and of his skill in applying it, which cannot be gainsaid, the more particularly when we take into account the epoch during which this remarkable feat was achieved. It is true that Mr. Smith hunted Hounds when the modern system of getting away close behind the Fox, and trying to burst him, had superseded the system that prevailed before 1750 of dragging up to the Fox and trying to hunt him down at the end of a long chase with Hounds that would have been beaten for pace in the first mile by those of Mr. Osbaldiston and Mr. Smith. But much of the contemporary evidence goes to show that Foxes were wilder in Mr. Smith's time in the sense that they probably had to travel long distances for their food, as there were fewer small coverts than exist to-day. Consequently there were fewer Foxes. It is true that these conditions were favourable to the Hounds in that their chance of changing Foxes was diminished. On the other hand the multiplication of small Fox coverts with artificial earths that has proceeded in the last fifty years makes the killing of a lot of Foxes, especially during the Cub-hunting, an easier matter than in the days of Mr. Thomas Smith. If the artificial earth is securely stopped late at night, and skilfully opened at the right moment in a morning's Cub-hunting, when the Cubs are beginning to wonder what to do, they are sure to creep into the earth, and the eating of one or more

g. Mrs. F. Wallis Armstrong, Jr.

Vol. 7.

of them is reduced to a certainty. For this reason the counting of noses is not in these days a supreme test of the capacity of the Huntsman and the Hounds, unless all noses are written off and not allowed to count until after November 1st, when there is not so much opportunity for digging. But each of Mr. Smith's ninety Foxes brought to hand probably represented a really hard day's work, even though he omits to state how many he killed above ground at the end of good runs. In this connection it should not be forgotten that in these illuminating pages he has confessed himself, indirectly perhaps, to be the complete Master of the use of the spade and the terrier.

But he was surely the complete Master of all other branches of Foxhunting craft. In the work which is now republished by Mr. Edward Arnold he puts into the mouth of various Foxes their experiences of being hunted by various Hounds and Huntsmen. His method, perhaps a trifle fanciful, is attractive in the highest degree to all lovers of wild animals, and the careful reader will find the Fox himself explaining the mistakes on the part of the Huntsman which allowed the Fox to baffle him. We know of no writing that explains the point of view of the Fox except this work, and that of Mr. Masfield. But it is no disparagement of Mr. Masfield to say that his "Reynard the Fox" is based upon his poetical talent and knowledge of the countryside, while Mr. Smith's fancy is based upon the lifelong experience of an enthusiast who has carefully studied the whole Art of the Chase, and thought out the application of the Science of Foxhunting to each particular phase and incident of the run.

The story of each Fox is full of interest, and it is not possible within the limits of this introduction to explore each situation. There are, however, one or two remarks in "Pythly' Story" which seem to extract the essence of the successful pursuit of the Fox. Now this essence is contained in the physiological truth that the vast majority of good runs are made, and stout Foxes killed, by the Hounds following the

line, first by their sense of smell, and secondly by their power to run fast enough and long enough to catch the Fox, provided he does not go to ground. Each moment the Hounds are not on the line is a moment wasted, which at a later stage in the run will probably develop into minutes, and ultimately spell defeat. Brilliant victories, and much galloping and jumping may be achieved by means of the Huntsman tearing off to a point without a scent, but ninety-nine times out of a hundred this kind of speculation ends in disaster. Mr. Smith contrives to criticize Mr. Osbaldiston's Hounds through the mouthpiece of "Pytchly" for overrunning the scent "owing to their great courage, which, in breeding of them, seemed to have been more attended to than the nose"; and "Pytchly" goes on to say:—"Luckily for us (the Foxes) the hunters fell into the mistake of trying to make what they called a flying pack. . . ." Such Hounds as would not go the pace without a good scent were always drafted, although, when there was a good scent, this sort could puzzle even the fast riders to keep with them. "Partly to this cause I attribute my having lived to my great age." "Pytchly" goes on to say that he often saved his life by going to ground in a drain and the Hounds being carried past the drain by their own mettle, and by their being too hardly pressed by the horsemen. This good Fox also tells us that he saved his brush more than once by the whole establishment posting forward for a view on his entering a woodland in the course of a run, so much so that by this system men seemed to imagine that a Fox could be run down by fast riding, and that "whippers-in are nearly all that is wanted." This practice, as well as the practice of giving up the hunted Fox and going to find another, was hailed by "Pytchly" as the means of his salvation. He describes his alarm when he heard Mr. Smith who was hunting his own Hounds, say to some gentleman who suggested that he should leave the cold scent, and find another Fox:—"I shall hunt this as long as a Hound will own the scent. We shall get up to him by and by and kill

him too." "Pytehly," with his charmed life eluded on this occasion even the great Mr. Smith himself, by getting to ground and pushing past a fresh Fox who was lying comfortably in the earth, and who was no doubt dug out and eaten with "ten mile point honours."

"Pytehly's Story" reveals the very foundation of Fox-hunting, which is to stiek to the line. There are indeed two opinions about nose. Some Foxhounds may have, like some human beings, a more sensitive organ of smell than others; if this can be discovered in a Foxhound, combined with tongue, speed, intelligence, perseveranee, and constitution, all contained in a frame of sufficient symmetry, then that Foxhound should be bred from freely. But the probability is, that while some Hounds may have keener noses than others the vast majority have sufficiently serviceable noses provided they are encouraged, or even allowed, to use them. There is no doubt whatever that where the Fox scores against the Hounds is by gaining time when he turns. It is the turn that tells. If all Foxes that were found went straight ahead, many more would be killed. The proof of this is that even on a day when scent is poor, Hounds always run fast when the Fox goes straight to an earth or drain. He knows the way. He goes straight through all his well-known smeuses in the fences, and the leading Hounds have no difficulty, his scent being in their faces all the way.

When he is not heading immediately for a drain, he is nearly sure to turn sooner or later, and if when he turns, the horsemen ride the Hounds past the point, and the Huntsman aggravates the difficulty by picking up the Hounds and setting out on a casting experiment before they have time to get their heads down, the most sensitive noses in the world will be doing no more good than if they were plunged into the oatmeal and flesh in the Kennel trough. The proper place for a Foxhound's nose is on the ground. No one knew this better than Mr. Smith, and the lesson could not be expressed more tersely than it is in this book by his friend "Pytehly."



This does not mean to say that Hounds should never be handled at all. If a pack of Hounds were literally left entirely to themselves day after day they might gradually lose the faculty of trying for themselves unless there was a good holding scent. Hounds take a very great deal from the mere presence and moral support of their Huntsman, and a certain point arrives when they need his actual guidance after they have done trying for themselves. The Huntsman who can accurately fix this point is the Huntsman they want.

After reading "Pytchly's Story" it is impossible to believe that Mr. Smith did not appreciate and act upon the moral that it points, but actually went to the other extreme of trying to hunt the Fox himself regardless of his Hounds. Yet Nimrod in his "Hunting Reminiscences" would have us believe that he did. After characteristically beginning his appreciation of Mr. Smith by describing his horsemanship, he then goes on to say that as a Huntsman he was wild, and that there was too much of the man, and too little of the Hounds to satisfy a lover of hunting. He would go away, says Nimrod, with the leading Hounds, caring nothing for the body of the pack, with his eye "forward to some point which his intuitive knowledge of the line Foxes take induced him to believe his had taken; and six times in ten he was right." Frankly, but with great respect to Nimrod, we do not believe it; and it should be remarked that even Nimrod himself only credits Mr. Smith with six correct flashes of intuition in every ten attempts. Invaluable as are the writings of "Pomponius Ego" as "costume pieces," even as historical references, it is open to doubt if he was really a reliable critic of the Huntsman's Art. He certainly makes Mr. Osbaldiston do some queer things in his imaginary description of a day with the Quorn Hounds in 1826, such, for instance, as view-holloaing with his finger in his ear before a single Hound had opened in covert. But we will let that pass.

It is just possible that he may have been out with Mr. Smith on one of those days when even the soundest of Huntsmen



may appear to be taking liberties with the Hounds; but it is quite certain that Mr. Smith could not have consistently performed in the manner described by Nimrod during the season when he killed ninety Foxes in ninety-one days' hunting. Six to ten is a different ratio.

The phrase "the intuitive knowledge of the run of a Fox" has been somewhat freely used by more than one writer. Does any man really possess it? Can the human intelligence really get inside the instincts of the Fox and perceive exactly what he is thinking about, except on occasions which are obvious to us all? The probability is that when the Huntsman does something which is set down to his intuitive knowledge of the run of a Fox he is acting naturally and almost, if not quite unconsciously, upon a mass of accumulated experience that many seasons' hunting has fixed upon his brain, which he can produce on demand when the situation arises. Knowledge, experience, memory, and the power of drawing on them and applying them may very likely pass for what people call intuition.

Those who would understand the Science of Foxhunting cannot do better than read *The Life of a Fox* in conjunction with *The Diary of a Huntsman* by the same Author. Professor Huxley said somewhere that Science is Organized Commonsense. The Science of Foxhunting is eminently a matter of Commonsense, and there is no wiser exponent of it than Mr. Thomas Smith. So far from relying on "intuition" he has the unique distinction of being the only writer who has put upon paper a definite recipe for a cast in the form of a Map, together with the whole process of reasoning by which it is justified. *The Diary of a Huntsman*, in which this Map appears, is a vindication of the importance of following certain rules. The departure from these rules on the part of various Huntsmen is the cause of the satisfaction expressed at the symposium of "Wily," "Pytchly," "Warwick," "Sandy" and all the other Foxes who appear in this Volume.

TO THE RIGHT HON.

CHARLES, EARL OF HARDWICKE,

etc. etc. etc.

MY LORD,—It is customary in a Dedication to use the language of fulsome adulation, even in cases where the writer and the person addressed affect an equal abhorrence of it. Adopting a more simple, straightforward course, and one more worthy of my name, for few foxes have run more straight, I will candidly inform your Lordship that the love I bear you is much the same as that borne to myself by the most venerable hen now cackling in your farmyard, whose half-fledged brood I have often thinned. But, my Lord, although I openly acknowledge my aversion to the unfeathered biped species to which you belong, yet the kinds and degrees of hatred are various as the characters of those towards whom we entertain it; and while some, affecting to treat my persecuted race as noxious vermin, destroy us by day and by night with snare, trap, gun, and every other engine which their ingenuity can devise, we have always found in your Lordship a fair and open

enemy, and one who disdained to have recourse to the cowardly contrivances above referred to. It is on this account, my Lord, that I have done you the honour to dedicate to you the following narrative of my eventful life.

Many are the happy hours that I have spent, some years since, in the neighbourhood of your Lordship's hen-roost in Hampshire, and latterly many a tender rabbit, etc., have I carried home from the plantations and fields which you now so handsomely preserve for the use of myself and my kindred at Wimpole; this conduct on your part would have ensured my lasting gratitude, could I forget how frequently I have been driven by hound and horn from those treacherous coverts. Although, from the above reasons, there cannot be friendship between us, there may, I trust there does, exist some feeling of mutual respect; you and your brethren are not insensible to those merits in our species which you affect to depreciate. Fabulists and other writers, in all languages, have quoted the sayings and doings of my ancestors, as lessons of instruction for youth; while the craft and cunning of your ablest statesmen have been, in many instances, entirely derived from our acknowledged principles and practice. Our heroism in the endurance of a violent and cruel death is equalled only by our dexterity in avoiding it. It was only last winter that a cousin of mine led a gallant field of two hundred horsemen over thirty miles of the finest country in England; and when at length overtaken by twenty couple of his enemies, each one larger and stronger than himself, he died amid their murderous fangs, without suffering a yell or cry to escape him! Yet do the poets of your race celebrate as a hero, one Hector, *a timid biped*, who, after a miserable run round the walls of

Troy, suffered himself to be overtaken and killed by a single opponent !

Such, my Lord, is the justice of historic fame in this world, wherein thousands of men have written ; whilst I alone of my tribe have been endowed with the power of thus using the quills of that excellent bird, which has been for centuries the favourite object of pursuit amongst the brave and skilful of my race.

However determined I still may be to trespass upon your Lordship's preserves, I will do so no longer upon your time. Our walks in life are different ; 'tis yours to ride, 'tis mine to run ; 'tis yours to pursue, 'tis mine to be pursued ; we shall meet again in the field, the horn will sound the alarm, my appearance will be greeted with a view-halloo that shall set the blood of hundreds in motion ! Whether after that day of trial I shall again sit amongst my listening cubs, and relate to them how many peers, parsons, and squires lay prostrate on the turf, and were soused in the brook while pursuing my glorious course, or whether my brush shall at length adorn your Lordship's hat, fate must decide.—Meanwhile I remain, your Lordship's obliged friend,

WILY.

MAIN EARTH, 6th June, 1843.



## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION

THIS little book may be looked upon as a curious manifestation of the movement among Foxes. The Editor ventures to send it forth, for an agreeable reminiscence to many who assisted in scenes which it describes; for some little instruction to sportsmen who have had less experience than himself; and for the common entertainment of all who like to listen to the way of the world in the woods.

HILL HOUSE, HAMBLETON,  
16th June, 1843.





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NOTE.—The Coloured Illustrations are from contemporary prints and paintings by HENRY ALKEN, S. HOWITT, and other well-known sporting artists, kindly lent by Mr. BASIL DIGHTON. The Black and White Illustrations are facsimile reproductions from the originals by TOM SMITH in the old Edition.







WILLY'S STORY.

## THE LIFE OF A FOX

A FAITHFUL history of the life even of a Fox may be not without its interest, for, to the wise, nothing in nature is mean, and truth is never insignificant. I was prompted to write this account of myself by overhearing one day, as I lay in a covert by the roadside, the following remarks by one of a party who were passing by on their return home from hunting a fox, which, as it appeared, the hounds had failed to kill.

“ Well, I’d give a good deal to know what became of our fox,—how was it he could have beaten us ? There is nothing I should like better than to invite to supper all the foxes that have escaped from packs by which they have been respectively hunted to-day, and then persuade them to declare to what cause they owed their escape. To tempt them there should be rabbits at top, rabbits at bottom and sides, rabbits curried, fricasseed, and rabbits

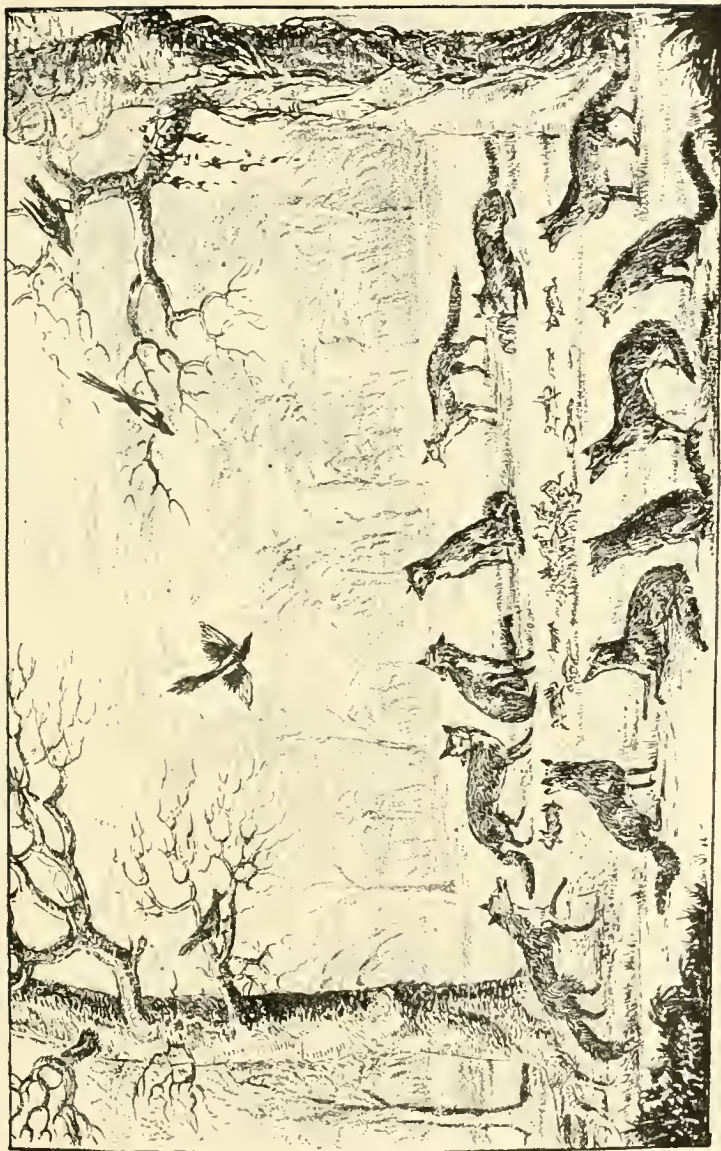


dressed in every imaginable way, by the best French cook."

The thought pleased me, and resolving to gratify my own curiosity, I invited all of my friends who had at any time beaten some pack of repute.

It was a fine moonlight night, in the middle of summer, when ten of my guests, besides an interloper, a stranger to us all, arrived at the place appointed, beneath an old oak tree in the New Forest.

For the foundation of my feast, nothing could be better than the bill of fare projected by the hospitable hunter; but as I knew that my friends would prefer everything *au naturel*, I dispensed with the services of M. Soyer, and merely added, for the sake of variety, some fine rats and mice, a profusion of beetles, and a bird or two for the few whose taste might be depraved enough to choose them. Our repast being over, it was agreed, that for our mutual instruction and entertainment, each in his turn should with scrupulous fidelity relate by what arts and stratagems, or by what effort of strength and courage, he had eluded and baffled those ruthless disturbers of our repose, the huntsman and his hounds. I was first called on to tell the story of my life, and thus began.



*T. Smith, Esq., del.*

WHY ADDRESSING HIS FRIENDS.

*Aug. 2.*





## WILY'S STORY

AM descended from the ancient family of the Wilys, and was born on the 25th day of March, in the year —. Within three or four weeks from that day of the year every fox of us in this

country is probably brought forth; and it seems especially designed that the female should thus produce her only litter in the year at a season when our favourite food, young rabbits, are most abundant. The spot in which I first drew breath was a breeding-earth, carefully chosen by my mother, in a well-known covert, called Park Coppice, situated in the centre of the Hampshire Hunt. It was not until the tenth day after my birth that I first saw light, or acquired sufficient

strength to crawl with safety to any little distance round our nest. Had I earlier possessed the use of sight, I might have strayed beyond my warm shelter, and for want of sufficient strength to return to it, have perished with cold. Thus Nature goes on to care for us. I had two brothers and two sisters, and we all thrived and grew rapidly with the nourishment of our mother's milk alone, until we were six weeks old, when she began to supply us with other food, such as rabbits, and rats and mice, which she tore to pieces and divided amongst us in equal shares, not however so much to our satisfaction as to prevent our snarling and quarrelling with each other thus early over our meals. That part of the earth where we lodged was between two and three feet square, with several passages just large enough for our mother to crawl along ; several of these crossed each other, and of two that terminated outwards one only was used by our mother, who stopped up the other for times of emergency. In these several passages we daily amused ourselves with chasing each other round and round. On one occasion we were interrupted in the midst of our gambols by the sudden entrance of our mother, who seized us with her sharp teeth, and carried us to the back of the earth. It seemed that she had

been watching outside, for immediately after this we were alarmed by a sound hitherto unheard by us. It was the voice of a man crying out, "Eloo in, Viper! fetch 'em out! hie in there, hie in!" The light was instantly shut out by the intrusion of a dog in a low and narrow part of the passage, which compelled him to crawl along with his head to the bottom. Our mother waited for him, where she had the advantage of higher space, and as he approached with his head thus low, she fixed her teeth across the upper part of his nose and pinned him to the bottom of the passage, where she held him so that he could not bite her, which he would have done had she attacked him after he had got beyond the lower part, when he might have raised his head up.<sup>1</sup> Whilst bleeding and howling with agony, he drew her backwards to the opening, where she let him go. It was in vain that the man tried to make him go in again, and so he left the

<sup>1</sup> If this were attended to in making artificial earths, it would be an advantage to the fox, who might then defend himself better from dogs of every sort; the great point is to have the entrance *only just sufficiently high* for him to get in.

They should be so arranged that the breeding places are situated higher than the entrances, so that water may run away; and when it is necessary to make the earth on level ground, the breeding places should be on the surface, and covered over with earth, so as to form a mound.

The places for breeding should be formed in a circle, in order that



place, declaring his conviction that there were cubs within, and that he would have them out another day. He was, however, disappointed, for our mother that night took us one by one to a large earth in a neighbouring wood. We were now two months old, and ceased to draw our mother's milk, which we no longer needed, as we were able to kill a rabbit or pluck the feathers of a fowl when she brought it to us, as well as she. Some of these feathers, which in our frolics we had carried to the mouth of the earth, once betrayed us to a couple of poachers, who had been lurking about the wood, and who noticing them, procured a long stick and thrust it into the earth, nearly breaking the ribs of one of my brothers. When they pulled it out again, they found the end of it covered with his hairs. This satisfied them, and leaving us scrambling and huddling together up to the back of the earth, they went away, resolving to come back next day with tools to unearth us, and expecting, as they said, to sell us for half-a-guinea apiece.

they may be more easily arched, like an oven, without having wood supports.

The passages should be floored with bricks or flints, to prevent rabbits from digging.

It is desirable to have the low passages not more than seven inches high, to exclude dogs. Four-inch work at the sides is sufficient, except for a foot or two at the entrance.



“ ’Twas a ’nation pity,” added one of them, “ we hadn’t brought my little terrier, Vick ; she would have fetched ’em out alive in her mouth, without our having the trouble of digging, though they was as big as the old ’un.”

“ Mind,” said the other, “ we beant seen, or else the squire will gie us notice to keep off.”

Their intentions were defeated ; for our mother, who had been all the time watching their goings on, anxiously waited for their departure, and no sooner had night set in than she again removed us to a gorse-covert hard by, and placed us in a nicely-sheltered spot, where she herself had often lain before. Here we were safe from poaching kidnappers, as it would have been impossible for them to find us without being found out themselves whilst searching for us. Let every mother lay up her cubs in gorse, or close and thick coverts, rather than in large earths, which are sure to be well known to the fox-taker. We were now three months old, and living upon young rabbits and mice, with which such coverts abound, feeding also upon other food, such as black beetles ; rabbits, however, were our favourite food, and if we could find them, we cared for little else. They are fruitful breeders, particularly

at this season of the year ; and a female has been known to carry two distinct broods of young at the same time, and to bring them forth three weeks after one another. This astonishing fact I have witnessed myself, and I have heard that the same thing has occurred with the female hare. The usual time of bearing is twenty-eight days. We now began to venture out of the covert at night-fall, or even before, being warned by our mother, whenever there was danger, with a peculiar noise that she made, like "keck, keck"; which we no sooner heard than we were out of sight in the covert, where we stayed until all was still again.

As we grew older we grew more bold and more cunning ; and being four months old, ventured farther abroad, even in the day-time, entering the fields of standing corn, until it was cut down, when the deeds we did there were suddenly brought to light.

"Why, John," says the farmer, "there must be some young foxes hereabouts ; look at the rabbits' feet lying about ; and what's the meaning of all these white feathers ? This comes of not locking up the fowls o' nights. Never blame the foxes, poor cratures ; but just go to the kennel, and tell

Foster, the huntsman, as soon as the corn is off, to bring his hounds."

"Very well, sir."

"But mind, he ain't to kill more than one of 'em, or else be hanged if ever I takes care of another litter."

All this was explained to me afterwards, for at the time I did not understand much about it. I only knew that the speaker was a very nice sort of man, and never doubted that he meant everything that is pleasant ; although I must say that his outward looks, the first time I saw him, did not at all take my fancy. There appeared to me something so ungainly and unnatural—something so very absurd, to see an animal reared up on end, and walking about on his hind legs ; to say nothing of what seemed his hide which hung about him in such a loose and uncouth fashion, as if nature had been sick of her job, and refused to finish it.

A few evenings after this I was crossing a field, and watching some young rabbits, with which I longed to become more nearly acquainted, when suddenly a large black dog and an ugly beast called a gamekeeper, jumped over a hedge. I immediately lay flat on the ground, hoping that I should not be seen ; when, however, I found them coming

within a few yards of me, I started off, closely pursued by the villainous dog, and seeing that I should soon be overtaken, turned round, and slipt away between his legs. I then made towards the hedge, and the dog springing after me, I suddenly turned round again, when he, trying to do the same, tumbled heels over head, and nearly broke his precious neck. My comfort was to think that he was certainly born to be hanged, for he followed me again as if nothing was the matter, and soon overtaking me, wearied as I was with the sport (I think they call it), he seized me by the back of the neck, and jogged away with me in his mouth to his master, who clapped me into his enormous pocket, and carried me home. I was kept there in a dark and dirty place, where all sorts of animals had been kept before. There I remained, who by nature am the cleanliest of animals, with my hairs all clotted with mire and filthy moisture, and should certainly have perished of a certain loathsome sickness, had not another gamekeeper luckily seen me, and told my owner the certain consequence of keeping me so. I was then taken out and put into a hamper out of doors, ready to be carried by the night-coach to London for sale. After trying in vain to gnaw a hole for my escape, I set about

making all the noise I could, which, the night being still, reached the ears of my mother, who quickly came and helped me with her teeth to finish the work which I had begun, and so I got out and away.

Having thus suffered for my boldness, I scarcely ever ventured out of the covert till dark, or nearly so ; generally, indeed, I remained in my kennel the whole of the day, unless I had not been fortunate in procuring food the night before. I have seen a female fox, when she had young ones, moving about earlier in the afternoon ; otherwise it is contrary to our habits to do so. Night is more dear to us than day, and the tempest suits our plans ; for man is then disposed to keep quiet, and we venture more boldly to approach his dwellings in search of stray poultry, which are to be found abroad, not having been driven into the hen-roost, owing to the neglect of their owners.

I resolved to accompany my mother in future as much as possible in her excursions, that I might profit by her prudence and observe her ways. She seldom went abroad till night, though sometimes she would venture in the dusk of evening. Upon one occasion I was much amused with an example of her engaging tricks. It was a bright moonlight night when I saw her go into a field, in which

many rabbits and hares were feeding. On first seeing her, some of them ran away for a few yards, some sat up on their hind legs and gazed at her, and some squatted close to the ground. My mother at first trotted on gently, as if not observing them ; she then lay down and rolled on her back, then got up and shook herself ; and so she went on till the simple creatures, cheated by a show of simplicity, and never dreaming she could be bent on anything beyond such harmless diversion, fell to feeding again, when she quietly leaped amongst them and carried off an easy prey.

We were now fully able to gain our own subsistence, but not the less would she watch over our safety. One of my brothers having found a piece of raw meat had begun to devour it, which she observing ran forwards, and as if in anger drove him away from it. He became sick and lost all his hairs, owing to poison, which I afterwards learnt had been put in the meat. It was fortunate for us that we had left the breeding-earth, for we must otherwise have all been infected with the same noisome disease, the mange. By first smelling it, and then turning away, she taught us in future to avoid anything of the kind that had been touched by the human hand. Thus when we happened to



be smelling with our noses to a bait covered over with leaves, moss, grass, or fine earth, she would caution us to let it alone by her manner of looking about, as if she were alarmed and expected to see our enemy the keeper. Sometimes the iron trap would be seen ; and then she would lead us to look at and smell it. Our noses, however, would not always be a safeguard, for after the trap has been laid some days, particularly if washed by rain, the taint of the evil hand would be gone, and though we ourselves, thanks to the watchfulness of our mother, escaped the danger, hundreds of others, led on by hunger, have fallen into the snare, losing either leg or toes. Baits for catching stoats and weasels, set upon a stick some fourteen inches above the ground, we carried away without mischief from the trap below. At about six months old we were three parts grown, I and my brothers being something larger than our sisters, whose heads were thinner and more pointed. The white tip of the brush was not, let me remark, peculiar to either sex of us. I and one of my brothers, and also one of my sisters, had it whilst the other sister and the other brother were altogether without it, not having a single white hair. That brother has been known to profit by the exemption, when on being viewed

in the spring of the year the hounds have been stopped with the remark, "It's a vixen ; there is no white on her brush." I have since observed that old male foxes are of a much lighter colour on the back than are the old female ones, which are commonly of a dark reddish brown ; and so it was with my parents. Our sire never helped to furnish us with food, although I have reason to think that I often saw him prowling about with my mother at night ; instances, however, have been known where the sire has discharged such an office after the young had lost their mother. For a few weeks we went on living a rollicking kind of life, and fancied ourselves masters of the coverts.

There was a coppice of no more than two years' growth, which enabled me to enjoy the beams of the sun as I lay in my kennel. This kind of shelter we all of us choose, especially when there are no trees of a large growth to be dripping down upon us in wet weather. Here as I lay one morning, early in October, I was roused from a sound sleep by the noise of voices, and of dogs rushing towards me. Away I ran, and had not gone above twenty yards before I heard the report of a gun, and instantly received a smart blow on my side, which nearly knocked me down, breaking however none of my



bones, and causing only a little pain and loss of blood. "Ponto!—curse that dog; he's after him," cried a voice, when the dog turned back, or else he must certainly have caught me, as I had only power to run a short distance into some thick bushes, where I lay down and listened to the following rebuke.

"You young rascal, how dared you to shoot at a fox—here, too, above all places? Don't you know that this is the very centre of the hunt? Had you killed him, you would have been a lost man, an outcast from the society of all good people, a branded vulpicide. Who do you think that has the slightest regard for his own character would have received you after that?"

"I really," replied the offending youth, "mistook him for a hare."

"Yes, and if you had killed such a hare, you should have eaten him, and without currant jelly too."

Now, if an humble individual of a fox may venture to give an opinion upon such a momentous question, I will say that the practice of destroying our breed for the purpose of preserving the quantity of game, is, where it prevails, equally selfish and short-sighted. For every fox thus destroyed hundreds of men are deprived of a day's sport, and

sometimes more than that ; and if none of us were spared, those hundreds of hunters would become so many keen shooters—how could the game preserver then keep up his stock as he did before ? And where would the wealthy capitalist rent his manor ? After this unlucky adventure I resolved in future to sleep with one eye open, and not without reason. I had scarcely recovered from the injuries which I had suffered, and had just settled in my kennel one morning about daybreak, coiling myself up for the usual snooze all day, and sticking my nose into the upper part of the root of my brush—the reason by the bye why the hairs there are generally seen to be standing on end or turned backwards—when I was startled by the voice of John Foster, whose name has been mentioned before : “ Eloo in ; e-dhoick, e-dhoick, in-hoick, in-hoick.” Disturbed by the unaccustomed sounds, I rose upon my fore-legs, and pricking up my ears listened for a moment or two, when I heard the rustling of the hounds running straight towards me, being led on by the scent that was left in the track of my feet, which parts, especially when heated by running, seem to leave more scent than any other part of the body. Thus the same organ becomes at once the means of inviting pursuit, and of escaping it. Off I went—the

awful tongue of an old hound ringing in my ear, and having about it surely some charm ; for no sooner had he opened than a score or two others of the pack came rushing from all sides towards him, and then such a horrible din as there was behind me. I ran—I flew, I knew not whither—I crossed a road in the wood—and then such frantic screaming and shouting—“ Tally-ho ! tally-ho ! ” mixed with the blast of Foster’s horn, that I was almost mad with fright, and must have fallen a victim to my savage pursuers, had not my brothers and sisters been disturbed by the clamour, and consequently been the cause of the pack being divided into several parts, thus enabling me to steal away towards the opposite side of the wood, where I remained. My state was such that I could not be still, as I ought, and I kept moving backwards and forwards and away from the cry of the hounds, which at times hunted us in several packs, then all together as they crossed each other, and then again separated. This had gone on for nearly half an hour when, to my great joy, they all went away with a frightful yell, leaving the wood and me miles behind them. I was congratulating myself on my escape, and listening to hear if they were returning, when I was startled by the sound of steps approaching, and a panting, as of some animal

in distress ; it was one of my brothers, evidently more beaten and terrified than myself, and who, on hearing something move and not knowing it was I, ran back out of sight in a moment, and I saw no more of him then. I remained where I was hidden until I had partly recovered from my fears, and not hearing the noise of hounds, had crept into some thick bushes, where I lay quiet, when to my horror I again heard the halloo of the huntsman, who seemed to be taking the hounds round the wood, with now and then the tongue of a single hound ; then, all on a sudden the deep voice of Sawyer, the whipper-in, calling, " Tally-ho ! there he goes ; 'tis a mangy cub ! " In a minute every hound was after him, and in full cry for a quarter of an hour ; suddenly the noise ceased, and the fatal halloo, " Whoop ! " was often repeated by the men with " Tear him, boys ; whoop ! whoop ! " And that was the end of my poor, mangy brother. They then, not having seen any other of us for some time, thought we were gone to ground, and went away. Happy was I to hear that horn, which had before caused me such terror, calling away the hounds, that, to judge from their loud breathing as they passed near me, were not loath to go, for it was nearly ten o'clock, and the heat most oppressive.





BREAKING COVER. BY S. HOWITT.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*



They were mistaken in thinking we were all gone away, although my brother and sisters had taken advantage of the hounds running in the open, and had gone across to the gorse-covert, from which my unfortunate brother just killed had often, in consequence of his mangy state, been driven by our mother. Again we had to thank that mother for our safety, for at the time when we were all nearly dead with toil and alarm, it seems she took an opportunity of running across the wood in front of the hounds, which soon got on her scent, and followed her as she led them away for some miles out of the covert. The huntsman then, convinced that they had got on an old fox, as soon as the men could stop the hounds, immediately brought them back to the covert where they had left us, hoping to kill one of us young ones.

It was not till some time after this memorable day that we ventured to take up our quarters in the wood again. Our mother thought it right to take us away to a covert about two miles distant, where, as the hounds only hunted cubs at this early part of the season, there were no young foxes<sup>y</sup>; consequently, for that time, we were left undisturbed, and soon began to feel as much at home as in the covert which we had left. Had it not been

for the shooters who frequently came with their spaniels, we should have even preferred it ; and they so frequently moved us that we soon took little notice of them, except by going from one part of the wood to the other. Indeed, we were rather benefited by them than otherwise, for we occasionally picked up a wounded or dead bird, hare, or rabbit, and after eating as much as we could, we always buried the remainder, scratching a hole in the ground with our claws, and covering it over with earth. Even this made us enemies ; for when by accident the dogs smelt it, and drew it out, the keepers immediately told their master that if they were not allowed to kill the foxes, there would not be a head of game left.

Constant disturbance after this induced us to return to the strong gorse where we had previously been, and which was nearly impenetrable by shooters; but we had not been here more than a few days, when, about ten o'clock in the morning, towards the end of October, I was again alarmed by hearing Foster the huntsman's now well-known voice : " Sawyer, get round the other side of the covert ; if an old fox breaks away, let him go, stop the hounds, and clap them back into the covert again, and then they will get settled to a cub. In-hoick !



e-dhoick ! e-dhoick ! ” I listened with breathless fear, and soon heard the rustling of hounds on every side of me, then a solitary slight whimpering, and Foster’s cheer, “ Have at him, Truemaids ; hoick ! hoick ! ” These sounds, frightful in my ears, sent every hound to the same spot ; and I started from my kennel, and got as fast as I could to the other side of the gorse. I soon gladly returned, and meeting an old dog-fox that at first I mistook for a hound, dashed away on one side before the pack had crossed my line. They ran by me, and continued following the old fox, till I heard “ Tally-ho ! gone away ” ; with a smacking of whips, and “ Hoick back, hoick back ” ; then for a few minutes all silent ; and then again the same terrible tongues drove me from my quarters. They were not in pursuit of me in particular, but running after either my mother or one of the rest or all of us, divided as they were into different lots. One of these at last got fast on my track, and away I went straight to the earth where we were born ; but to my surprise and disappointment I found it stopped up with a bundle of sticks, and covered over with fresh earth ; for it was not in that state when I passed by it the night before. I waited for a few moments, and tried to scratch an opening ; but

hearing the hounds hunting towards me, I returned to the gorse, where they shortly followed me. Owing to my being smaller than they were, I could easily run a good pace in it, where they were obliged to go slowly ; and running in the most unfrequented tracks, I contrived to keep out of their way. At times they were all quite silent, and could not hunt my scent at all, owing probably to the ground and covert where the hounds had been running so often being stained. This dreadful state of things went on for a length of time, till at last I heard them halloo "Tally-ho ! tally-ho ! gone away." Shortly after this the hounds left the covert, hunting after the fox which was seen to go away, and which again happened to be our mother. The men soon found out their mistake ; and as they were some time absent, they must have had difficulty in stopping them, which at first I heard them trying to do.

Meanwhile I had been flattering myself that I was safe, and that once more I had escaped ; but quickly I heard them coming back very quietly, as if intending again to hunt me. Previously to this I had found a rabbits' burrow, into which I crept. I was luckily, as it happened, too much distressed and too heated to remain there, and left it, and went to the opposite side of the covert. At this



STOPPING HOUNDS. BY S. HOWITT.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*



time a cold storm of wind and rain came on, notwithstanding which an old hound or two got on my line of scent, and hunted it back the contrary way to that which I had gone, till they came to the rabbit burrow, where they stopped, and began bay-ing and scratching with their feet at the entrance.

There can be little doubt that hounds have a language well understood by each other, and I never can forget the noise made by the whole pack as they all immediately came to the spot ; the men hallooed " Whoop ! whoop ! have at him, my lads " ; and one was ordered to fetch a terrier, and tools for digging. During the time they were at this, I stole away from the covert in another direction, and so saved my life. It seems they soon found out that I had left the earth, tried the covert over again, and then went home, vowing my destruction another day.

This was warning enough to prevent my remaining longer in or near this covert for the present. Venturing farther abroad, I returned to that in which I had been disturbed by the shooters, and there frequently picked up more wounded birds ; I also found, in a field close by, part of a dead sheep, which a shepherd had left for his dog. Some of this I took away and buried. I was returning for another bit, when the rough dog, which had



just arrived, suspecting that I had purloined his meat, flew at me the instant he saw me with such fury that he knocked me over and over again without getting hold of me. He then turned, and was in the act of securing me with his teeth, when I gripped one of his legs and bit it through ; the pain which he suffered prevented him from more than mumbling me with his teeth ; so I got off, and made the best of my way to the covert that evening.

I felt next day that, bruised as I was, I could not have escaped for ten minutes from a pack of hounds had they found me ; I therefore lost no time in reaching a main earth, into which I got before the earth-stopper had put to ; but I had scarcely done so when he came at daylight, and to my great dismay stopped it up. I remained there all day and till late at night, and no one came to open it, and had I not contrived to scratch my way out, I know not how long I might have remained there, for I have reason to know that many of us are stopped up in rocky earths and drains for weeks, and starved to death, owing to the forgetfulness or sheer cruelty of the stoppers. I have heard such sad tales as—but just now it would interrupt my story to tell them.

It so happened, my friends, that for some time

I was not hunted by hounds, and contrived to extend my rambles till I was acquainted with a great part of the country. Occasionally lying in my kennel, if in an open covert, and hearing a pack of hounds in full cry near, I moved off in an opposite direction, but sometimes not without being seen by some of the wide and skirting hunters, who lost their day's sport in riding after me and hallooing "Tally-ho!" but I always kept quiet in my kennel when I heard hounds in full cry if I happened to be in a strong gorse-covert. Thus passed off the greater part of the first winter of my life.

On one occasion I was lying in rather an exposed place by the side of a pit, in the middle of a field, when I saw a man pass by on horseback, who, on seeing me, stopped, and after looking a short time, rode on. Till the noise of his horse's feet was out of hearing I listened, and then stole away, which was most fortunate, for in the course of a few hours the hounds were brought to the pit, the man having told the huntsman where he had seen me, as he thought, asleep; though we foxes, however it may seem, are seldom otherwise than wide awake.

When the month of February arrived, I showed my gallantry by going and visiting an interesting

young friend of mine of the other sex in a large covert some distance off, and there, to my chagrin, I met no less than three rivals.

One morning we were surprised by hearing the voice of Foster, drawing the covert with his hounds, and giving his peculiar "E-dhoick ! e-dhoick ! kille-kid-hoick (probably for Eloo-in-hoick) !" It seems that none of us felt very comfortable or much at home here, and all must have left our kennel about the same time ; for the hounds were soon divided into several packs and running in full cry in different directions. Fortunately, those that were following me were stopped ; at which I rejoiced not a little, having travelled twenty miles the night before, besides my wanderings in and about the covert. These travellings and wanderings are the cause why so many more of us dog-foxes are killed by hounds in the month of February than in any other three months of the year. Two dog-foxes which had come from a great distance were killed by the hounds that day. I had had reason to be jealous of them, as they had for the last week or two been tracing and retracing the woods in pursuit of a female incessantly each night, until daylight appeared, when they were obliged through fatigue to retire to their kennels.



I recollect hearing, as I lay that day in a piece of thick gorse, the following proof of the patience and good temper of Sawyer, the whipper-in. The hounds had followed a fox into a wood close by, having hunted him some time in close pursuit, when a jovial sort of person, who constantly rode after these hounds, saw a fresh fox—being no other than myself—and began hallooing to the full extent of his voice. Sawyer immediately rode up to him, and addressed him thus : “ Now, pray Mr. W——, don’t ye halloo so, don’t ye halloo ; ’tis a fresh fox ! ” But still the person continued as loud as ever. The same entreaty was repeated again and again, and still he would halloo. At last Sawyer gave it up as a forlorn hope, and left him, just remarking, “ Well, I never see’d such an uneasy creature as you be in all my life.” He then followed the pack, which had by that time left the cover in pursuit of the first fox, which they had been running all the time. Yet we foxes have reason to know that a more determined and ardent enemy to us in the shape of a whipper-in than this man never lived. It fortunately happened for me that the weather now became very dry ; for I was not unfrequently disturbed by these hounds, and though the scent was not very good

in this plough country, I was at times much more distressed after being hunted than on former occasions, and was often nearly beaten ; for it is not in our nature to be moving in the heat of the day, and not being so much inured to it as the hounds were, I expected to fall a prey to their able huntsman, who, when his hounds would not hunt me, appeared to know where I was gone to ; and very often, when all was silent and I thought myself safe, brought them on without hunting, and crossing the line I had come ; so that against him and his clever whipper-in, I had, notwithstanding the dry weather, enough to do to save my life.

On one occasion I had a most severe day's work, for the scent was remarkably good. I was lying quiet in my kennel, very unwilling to move, though I heard the hounds running a fox close to me, which they very soon lost, as they could not, or would not, hunt it. I thought this very strange, as by the use of my nose I knew it to be a good scenting day. It turned out that the fox was a vixen, which had just laid up her cubs ; the effect of which generally is, that the scent becomes so different that hounds, old ones particularly, appear to know it, as if by intuition, and will not hunt it. As I had not had more notice of their approach I

thought my best chance of escape was to be perfectly still,—a plan often adopted by me since on a good scenting day ; but it was of no use, for the huntsman almost rode upon me in drawing the cover, and I was obliged to fly when the hounds were close to me ; however, after a long run, I most luckily escaped.

The breeding season for game now came on, and being still young I frequently was near being tempted to seize an old bird as she sat on her eggs, but the difference in the scent of the bird prevented me. At length, when I had been prowling about near a farmyard in which poultry were kept, one night that I had not met with other food, I pounced on a hen which was sitting in a hedge, but the state she was in gave such an unpleasant taste to her flesh, that after eating a little I left it, and have never since touched a bird of any sort when sitting. She has at that time, indeed, but little flesh on her bones, and I believe that no old fox will take one for his own eating, although a female may sometimes carry one off, when hard pressed for food for her young. The same instinct which prevents hounds from hunting a fox with young, thus prevents much destruction of birds when sitting. It seems like a design of nature to save the race of birds that have their nests

on the ground from being entirely destroyed by ourselves, or by vermin, such as stoats and weasels.

Rabbits are too often the perquisites of the gamekeeper, and the iron traps which he sets with the pretence of catching them are the destruction of hundreds of us. This might be prevented if the master would only insist on these traps not being employed at all, and compel the use of the wire snare, and of ferrets to get the rabbits out of their burrows.

Having by this time learnt from my mother all that she could teach me, I followed her example in many things. Amongst them I remarked, that on a wet and windy night she almost always chose, for various reasons, to lie in a gorse-covert. It is generally dry and without droppings from trees ; it is also more quiet and freer from the roaring of the wind than when near to them. Besides this, we are not so liable to be disturbed by the shooters, and though we should be so, are out of sight. We are also there out of sight of some of our troublesome feathered neighbours, the crows, magpies, and jays, who would betray us when moving abroad during the daytime. They are always moving with the first appearance of daylight, and we are glad to get out of their sight as soon as we can and go into

our kennel, lest they should betray us to the keepers, who are also often abroad at that time. The worst is, that at times, when we think we have got away from hounds which are hunting us, these birds, by making a noise and darting down almost upon us, as they continue to do where we run along, point out to the hunters exactly where we are.

It has often happened that I have been betrayed by an old cock pheasant. No bird has a quicker eye than he has, and directly he saw me he would begin kuckupping, and continue to make this noise as long as I remained near him, obliging me to move away.

My life during the summer months was one of almost uninterrupted pleasure. Naturally fixing my headquarters near the part of the country where I was bred, I would often ramble by night a great distance, and frequently remarked with surprise, as I crossed any line that I had taken when hunted, the wonderful straightness with which I had pursued it, as it was often in a direction where there were no large woods or earths ; but I recollected that I had the wind for my only guide, and went as if blown forward by it ; so that I could hear whether the hounds were following me at a greater distance than if I had gone against it ; and besides

this, it was more difficult for them to smell the scent which was lodged on the ground over which I had run, when blown away from their noses, than when blown towards them.

One circumstance occurred to check my joy, namely, the loss of my other brother, who had accompanied me in one of my midnight rambles into the adjoining country near Hambledon ; and (for though so long ago as 1828, I well remember it) we had been induced to swim across some water to an island situated in Rookesbury Park, belonging to Mr. Garnier, on which it so happened there was a nest of young swans ; and although we did not venture to touch them, the old ones were so angry with us for our intrusion, that when we attempted to quit the island they would not allow us to do so, but continued swimming backwards and forwards to show their anger. At length, as daylight was appearing, my poor brother was rash enough to make a sally, and had nearly swum across to the land, when, overtaking him, they commenced an attack, and by flapping their wings against his head, and keeping him under water, speedily drowned him, just as a man came up to see what they were about.

They seemed to exult in their prowess, and whilst they were proudly throwing back their heads,



and rowing in triumph round their victim, I took an opportunity of crossing the water on another side and escaped, resolving never in swimming to encounter the same risk again. Nothing worth relating occurred until towards the beginning of the following winter. It is true that I was often induced to move and to quit the wood in which I lay, owing to my being disturbed by the hounds ; but as they never followed me far, and were stopped by the whipper-in when I left the covert, it was evident they came on purpose to hunt young cubs ; I therefore took care to retire to a gorse-covert near Sutton Common, where none were bred, much to the regret of the owner, a Rev. Baronet, who is one of our greatest friends, as no keeper of his would dare to destroy a fox without pain of losing his place. Here I remained quiet for some months, till one morning I was waked by the noise of Foster the huntsman ; and shortly afterwards the whimpering of a hound told me that he was on the scent left by my footsteps on my way to my kennel, although it was where I had passed before day, and several hours had gone by. I was led by the wind that day to take them over a country seldom if ever gone over by them before, namely, Wolmer Forest, crossing one or two rivers, from extreme dread of

this huntsman and his powerful pack. Whether it was the water or the fences that stopped him, I cannot say, but I suspect it was the latter ; although a few years before nothing could have done it. The hounds were at times running without him, and it was in consequence of that, I think, that I eventually beat him and escaped. In the course of a few days I returned to the same covert, and had not been there more than fourteen more when this man's awful voice startled me again.

I was soon prepared for another run with a north-east wind, which might have led me to take the same line as before, but that I heard Sawyer the whipper-in exclaim, "'Tis our old fox, and he went through the same holes that he did the last time we found him." He gave the view-halloo directly afterwards. I felt certain that they came again thus soon determined if possible to kill me ; and though frightened a little, I took care to keep on without stopping to listen, as I had done before ; so that I kept a good distance ahead of them, and continued my best pace for many miles, crossing Wolmer Forest into Sussex. I no longer heard the hounds following me, and being much distressed with fatigue, ran forward to very short distances, and then turned either to the right or to the left,



in order to baffle my pursuers. At length I came opposite to some buildings, and seeing a large pile of wood, crept in amongst it and lay down. After listening for some time, I heard the cry of a few hounds not far off ; but the noise ceased just about the spot where I turned down the road, and all was silent for some time. At last I heard the voice of Sawyer the whipper-in, saying he must take the hounds home to the kennel if his horse would enable him ; but that the huntsman's and the other whipper-in's horses were both done ; and so they were, for they never lived to reach their stable.

Having again escaped from that clever huntsman Foster and his pack, I determined at first to remain in this part of Sussex. It was hunted by Colonel Wyndham, whose hounds I soon had reason to know were not less fatal than those by which I had lately been so severely hunted. They seemed to me to be quicker in their work, and to keep closer to me when it was a good scenting day ; although when it happend to be otherwise they could not hunt me so long or so far as the other pack had done. Once or twice when I was nearly tired they left me, owing to the scent being bad, and went to find another fox, when I believe that Foster and his pack would have gone on longer, if

not killed me. The pace they obliged me to go, when hunting me over the hills, was terribly fast, and very probably the cause of their not making so much cry when in pursuit. Indeed they ran almost mute, and at times got very near to me before I was aware of their approach.

This I found was too dangerous a country for me to remain in ; and so, when on another occasion they found me, I ran into the Hambledon country, not far from Stanstead Forest, where I fortunately escaped, and finding myself in a wild part near Highdown Wood, did not venture to return, feeling sure that with the Colonel's quick pack and blood-like horses, if they found me on a good scenting day I must be beaten by them. However, here was in store for me as great a trial of my powers ; for it seemed that Mr. Osbaldiston's hounds were just come for this part of the season to hunt the country. One morning I heard Sebright's voice cheering on his pack, which, with a burning scent, were running a fox like lightning. Suddenly there was an awful silence ; then Dick Buxton's screech, and the "Whoop !" soon followed. For a minute or two only I heard a noise, as if hounds were quarrelling, and that no sooner ended than Sebright saying, "Now, Mr. Smith, this is

the first real good scenting day we have had." I could stop no longer, but stole away, hoping not to be seen ; but, my friends, fancy my horror when, on stealing from the gorse on the open down, and thinking that the rising ground would screen me, I saw this famed pack and first-rate huntsman within two hundred yards of me. I stopped for an instant, but scorned to return into the gorse, so took away across the hilly downs near Hog's Lodge, and crossed the Petersfield road to Portsmouth, over the open down for two miles, with the pack viewing me the whole time, except a moment or two when I was rounding the tops of the hills, then again they saw, and swung after me down the steep sides of the hills. I cleared the first fence adjoining the down, and had scarcely got fifty yards when I saw the whole pack flying over it after me, and at the next fence I turned short to the right as soon as I had cleared it. They were driven a little beyond it before they turned, which gave me a trifling advantage. I now continued to gain ground in advance of the pack, and though they never once were at fault, or lost the scent for a minute, and went on several miles across open downs into Sussex, still I kept on, determined to save my life.

I had gone full nine miles as straight as I could

go, and had just turned for the first time to the right, and was ascending the top of the highest point of the down, when, to my great joy, I saw the hounds stopping and trying in vain to recover the scent, which was destroyed by my having run through a large flock of sheep. They now could not hunt the scent a step farther, though on the middle of an open down; and such was the disappointment and chagrin occasioned by it to Sebright, that he was heard by a friend of mine to say, that if the squire would give him a thousand a year, he would not stop to hunt a country, where the scent was so soon entirely lost; and that, until this occurred, nothing in the world would have made him believe than any fox could have run straight away from such a pack as his, under such apparently favourable circumstances.

I remained till the following season in this part of the country, in a covert belonging to Sir J. Jervoise, called the Markwells, when I was first roused from my slumber by the voice of another huntsman, Mr. Smith,<sup>1</sup> who at that time hunted his own hounds, known as the Hambeldon pack. It was about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the month of December, and fortunately I prepared

<sup>1</sup> The Author.—ED.

myself for a day's work, for sure enough I had it. When I first broke covert I took the open, and in running had the wind in my face for about two miles, then finding the new pack pressing close to my heels, I turned short back with the wind, which, most fortunately, as it appeared to me, was now blowing in a direction straight to a large earth that I had formerly discovered at Grafham Hill in Sussex. The pace had blown the hounds, and the great change, by turning back and down the wind, caused them to stop for a minute or two; and although I soon heard them again hunting me, at a pace not quite so fast, their perseverance induced me to keep on straight forward. I had already gone for about ten or twelve miles, when, crossing a grass field near some buildings, I was startled at hearing the noise of other hounds close by. It was the pack in Colonel Wyndham's kennel. A view-halloo, which came from one of his men, made me continue to get on as fast as I could, and by the time it was nearly dark I fortunately reached the large earth at Grafham Hill. I had not been there for more than a few minutes when, lying with my head near the entrance of the earth in order to breathe more freely, I heard the hounds come up to the spot and try to get in, on which I

retreated, but no farther than I was obliged to do, according to the plan I always adopted when distressed or nearly run down.

The distance I had run, straight ahead from where I started, was found to be twenty-seven miles. One of the four or five men who came in said that they must have changed their fox when the hounds ran through these large coverts. The reply was that it was scarcely possible, as they never once broke out of the road and rides, within which the fox had kept during the whole time.

It was now dark, and the hounds had full forty miles to return to their own kennel. I had reason, however, to know that they stopped that night half way, at the Drove Kennel; for during the night I had returned back as far as I could to the place whence I came, and intended to remain there; but all the middle of the next day I heard the sound of the horn which I had so often heard during the severe run I had had the day before, and which it appears was blown with the hope of its being heard by two hounds that were missed the night before, having come to the earth and remained some time after the pack had gone away. On hearing the horn I soon left my kennel, and, though very stiff, was obliged to make the best use



of my legs that I could ; for the pack, on their way home, crossed the line I had taken in the night, and were soon heard running in full cry after me. Glad was I to hear Mr. Smith order his men to stop them ; for I must speedily have fallen to them had they only been aware of my weakness. One curious fact remains to be told, namely, that the two hounds remained for three days in the part near where they were left at the earth, and found their way back to the kennel on the fourth day afterwards. Now it is true that we foxes easily retrace our way on all occasions, but it must be recollected that we are often led straight by having in view some point, a main earth, for instance ; when that is not the case, on being pursued by the hounds and guided by the wind, we notice the different points as we pass, and choose that line in which it appears least likely for us to be viewed ; we thereby without difficulty retrace our line the same night, at least for some distance, unless too exhausted to travel more than necessary to procure food, when we remain near where the hounds have left us. I have done this for a short time, when the coverts and country to which I belonged have been much disturbed by the hounds ; but invariably returned the same night. Now the hound has



enough to do when hunting us without taking notice of the country which he passes over ; and we must not assume to ourselves greater sagacity than belongs to him, for I believe that we are but varieties of the same kind. I observe amongst our party one who may have something to say upon that subject presently.

I underwent another severe day's work in the same country with another pack of hounds. In consequence of finding plenty of rabbits in a covert near the Waterloo Inn, I remained there for some time, and my peace was undisturbed, until I was roused one morning by the strange but fine voice of Mr. King's huntsman, Squire. After running round the covert a few times, I found that his quick pack were not to be trifled with ; I therefore went straight away in the direction of Sussex. They still pressed me on through the large coverts there, and I left them in a wood, their huntsman and his master, Mr. King, imagining that I had gone to ground in a wood in Colonel Wyndham's country—a mistake which happened in consequence of my having crept into an earth that I remembered to have seen there, but which, when I found that it was merely a rabbit earth, I left, and went on. The hounds stopped there, but it was



FULL CRY. BY S. ALKEN.  
*Lent by Basil Dighlam.*



soon discovered that they would not lie, and the delay caused my escape, for I must otherwise have been killed. It was a terribly severe day, for I had been hunted by them more than twenty miles from the place where they found me. A great part of the country I ran across was the same that I had gone over in the previous year when hunted by Mr. Smith's pack, though the distance was not so far by some miles. The great difference I observed in these two packs was that the present one were rather faster, and could not be heard so plainly when running: this was in some measure made up for by Squire's voice, which I so often heard to cry "Whoop!"

I was afraid to remain in these parts, so travelled westward, until I reached a wood by the sea-side near Southampton, and there, owing to the scarcity of rabbits, was obliged to seek other food, often consisting of dead fish, which I found on the shore. I had more than once a narrow escape from being shot by sailors, as they passed by in a boat at moonlight, and was induced to leave this part also. Following the sea-shore I crossed the Itchen Bridge, for I had not forgotten my escape from the swans, and would never trust myself again in water when it could be avoided, and by degrees, as the spring

came on, I got into the New Forest. Fortunately for me the system of hunting in that part until near the middle of May was discontinued by Mr. Codrington, who then hunted it. He was an excellent sportsman ; and would never take an unfair advantage of us, but left all to his hounds.

Although I had escaped during the winter months from other good packs, it was doubtful that I could have escaped at this season, when the weather is sometimes very hot ; for although, as I have observed before, the heat affects the hounds, it is more usual for them to be moving about in it than it is for us, and they therefore suffer from it less.

I passed this summer most agreeably, living much on beetles, with which the forest abounds, occasionally visiting the sea-shore to seek for dead fish, and getting a fair supply of rabbits. The old rabbits frequently laid up their young in the open parts of a country, in the middle of fields, or any where far from hedges, probably to be more out of the way of stoats and weasels. The number of nests of young rabbits that a single one of us destroys is so enormous that it would seem to many quite incredible. I got well acquainted with the purlieus of the forest in my frequent travels ; in spite of which my feet were never tired by treading

on hard flints, as they used to be in upper Hampshire ; and, strange as it may appear, in that flinty country I do not recollect ever having had them cut or made sore by them, even when I was pursued by the hounds ; probably in some measure owing to our quickness of sight, and to our not having to hunt a scent, so that our attention is not diverted. I believe I owed to these very flints the salvation of my life, as they obliged the hounds to go more slowly over them, and thus afforded me more time.

The autumn had nearly passed, and being undisturbed by hounds, I flattered myself that I was safe ; but my dream soon vanished ; for it appeared that the only reason why they had not disturbed me was, that they are not allowed to hunt in the forest so early as is done in other countries. I was soon alarmed by hearing at intervals Mr. Codrington's deep voice, so unlike the style of the huntsmen by whom I had been hunted in other parts. The hounds appeared to understand it well enough, and as they soon spread through the covert adjoining that where I lay, I stole away to some distance, where I remained within hearing of them. It was a long time before they left the first covert, as it happened to be one in which I had been moving about when searching for food, and consequently



these well-nosed hounds got on my scent, there called "the drag." This fine old huntsman believing that a fox was near, persevered for an unusual length of time in trying to find one, and owing to one or two hounds occasionally throwing their tongues, waited in an agony of expectation. At length being led to the covert which I had just left, they soon got on the line which I had taken when I came from my kennel two hours before, and which they had great difficulty in hunting. By this time I thought it right to leave the wood where I had stopped. A man saw me go away, and hallooed loudly, but still the hounds were not allowed to be brought on; and they continued a walking pace until they got to the spot where I had waited, at the extremity of the wood, and where, though at some distance, I heard the cry of the hounds following me too closely to be despised by me as they had hitherto been. It seemed that they were left entirely to themselves, for I heard no men's voices cheering them on, as in other countries when running in the same way. As they continued without any stopping, I resorted to the only means then in my power, and ran through a herd of deer, with which the forest abounds. This plan succeeded, and probably saved my life; for when the deer



heard the hounds coming towards them in full cry, they came straight after me in the line I had run, and so spoilt the scent which I had left.

I well recollect, a short time after this, overhearing, as I lay in my kennel, the following conversation between two men as they rode by : “ What a pity it is that Mr. Codrington is so silent when his hounds are hunting their fox.” “ Well, I don’t know that ; for suppose now you saw some weasels hunting a rabbit, do you think they would hunt it better if some fellow was to keep on hallooing to them ? ” No reply followed the question, although I anxiously waited to hear one. As far as I was concerned, I regretted that more noise was not made, as it would have assisted me, and not the hounds. The silent system is, at all events, a most dangerous one for the fox before he is found. I have had some narrow escapes from these very hounds being brought to a small covert or bog in this forest so silently that they surrounded me before I was aware, and I have with difficulty got away from them. Indeed, many female foxes have thus been killed heavy with cub, and in that state incapable of great exertion. Had these females heard the huntsman’s voice in time they might have moved and run to earth, or shown in what state they were, so that the hounds might

have been stopped in time to save their lives. As to the system of not assisting the hounds, I am sure that every fox will agree with me in approving it. Give me plenty of roads and dry fallows, or a few deer or sheep, and even when the scent is good I shall not fear to be killed by an unassisted pack. Without such impediments a pack so educated would be the most dangerous of all, and even with them, if in the hands of a judicious huntsman.

This pack was (alas ! that I should say was, for he is no more,) hunted by a kind-hearted and excellent man, who has been heard to say, at a moment when his hounds were running very hard, and going like Leicestershire—he being nearly twenty stone—“ I hope I shall not see them any more till they have killed.” Notwithstanding the system just described, as many of my friends have fallen victims to this pack as to any in this part of the country. Nevertheless here I shall remain for the present, and not go away until I am fairly driven.

I now, my friends, conclude for the present the history of my life, only omitting such important events as may happen to come out in the course of your own stories ; for I must now call upon you to tell us what you have to say of yourselves.

But hold hard there. Who or what art thou, half-bred thing, that durst be showing thy ill-breeding with feigning to sleep, or with eating rabbit, when thou shouldst have listened to the words of thy betters? Cock-tail, speak.

"Call me Cock-tail, half-bred, ill-bred, mongrel cur; but know that I claim kindred with your noble selves."

*All.* "Audacious dog-face!"

"Honour ye the Cock-tail! Cock-tail had a grandfather!"

*All.* "Impossible! Never!"

"Listen, then, to facts; facts are stubborn things, and if my story do not please, it may at least surprise you."

## COCK-TAIL'S STORY



It is known, I believe, that half-bred animals do not reproduce their kind, and if it were otherwise innumerable would be such kinds. My mother's father was a fox. Her mother was a well-bred terrier in colour much like your own. She belonged to a man who lived near Harborough, in Leicestershire, and was valuable to him for her extraordinary talent in killing rats and mice, as well as for the use which he occasionally made of her in poaching at night. Wishing to procure a mixed breed between her and a fox, he took her one night, at a particular period of the spring, to a certain spot in a wood which he knew to be much frequented by foxes, and having fastened her against a tree, left her there

till morning. On the following night he removed her to a short distance from the spot where she was left the night before. After doing the same for several nights he took her home, and in nine weeks after that she produced four young ones, all of which are now living, and much like a fox. My father was a brown terrier, and my mother may be seen at any time, as she is fastened up by a chain in the inn-yard at Market Harborough. The hair on her back and sides is thick, and stands nearly upright like that of a fox. The hairs upon the upper side of the tail are not so long and full as those of a fox, but the under part and the sides are the same; the tips of them are black. Her legs and feet are black, and the latter are round like yours, with a little tan-colour behind the knee-joint. Her ears are pointed, and when she is at rest laid back, but when she is roused pricked up like your own. All these properties you may behold in me, but not exactly in an equal degree. The most remarkable difference between ourselves and you is this, that neither my mother nor myself are endued with the strong odour peculiar to the fox. My mother has never been let loose by the consent of her keepers, even in the inn-yard; but having once got loose by accident, when about two

years old, she ran away a long distance, and being followed into a yard was there secured again. It was observed when running that she carried her tail level as I do, like a fox; sometimes it was crooked, but never upright. It was not so much curled as mine is.

I lived with my mother, and when I was two years old, a master of fox-hounds happening to hear of us, came to see us; and after making many inquiries, persuaded my owner to let him take me away with him. I was then placed under the care of the old feeder of hounds, with orders that I should be allowed to run about in the house, with his children for companions. I was shown to every one as a curious animal, and became a great favourite, but all attempts to tame me failed, and I never would let a stranger touch me. My master took me out with his dogs when he went to shoot rabbits, but found me wholly useless. The sound of the gun and the barking of the dogs frightened me so much that I always ran away into the nearest hedge or wood to hide myself; and I felt that my fate was sealed when I heard the old feeder say to my master one day, "Now, sir, I am sure that this here 'vulp'" (for so I was called) "will never be no use at all; for he is as wild and timorous now

he is two years old as ever he was. We can't get un to do anything like the terriers ; he frisks about like an eel, so as we can't touch un at times." Finding that I had no friend to say a good word for me I absconded, and when seen at a distance have often been mistaken for a fox, and scared by the cry of "Tally-ho ! tally-ho !" and the hounds following me. That they never caught me I suppose may be attributed to my not having the fox's strong scent.

"Thy story is marvellous ; but I must doubt its truth until I see thy mother. I fear that thou art like other vain creatures, who, knowing their own unworthiness, would fain connect themselves with those who are in any way excellent, but beware of betraying us."

"Ha ! is it so ? I am off."

"He is gone, and grins defiance ! This mongrel will think nothing of destroying us by the dozen ; but he may suffer for it yet.

"And now, my friends, as we have heard the mongrel's account of himself, let us hear Craven's story. Open thy lips and throw thy tongue freely ; tell us how many times thou hast beaten these vexatious hounds, and be not chary of thy experience."





## CRAVEN'S STORY

It is unnecessary to enter into the ordinary details of my life after having heard our friend who invited us here. Consequently my story will be a short one. I was born and bred in Savernake

Forest, in the Craven Hunt, where my father and mother had been considered to be of some importance, having often beaten a famous pack of hounds in that country. To the best of my recollection, the first pack of hounds by which I was hunted belonged to Mr. I. Ward; from them I had many narrow escapes, which I now, having since been hunted by other hounds, set down to their immense size, for although they could and did hunt me in an extraordinary manner, and

pursued me closely in the flat country and in the forest, yet I found that I left them far behind when running over the flinty hills which separate that country from Mr. Ashton Smith's. Their steady style of hunting made it difficult to shake them off elsewhere. I once overheard a man remark to their master that they were larger than any that he had ever seen, especially as to their heads. The reply at first surprised me. "Yes, I like them large, for when once they get them down in hunting they are so heavy that they cannot get them up again." After being hunted by them under his direction, I was hunted by them when they belonged to Mr. Horloek, from whom also I have had some narrow escapes, principally by running through large woods, where they soon changed me for another fox. I recollect once, when lying in a small covert near Benham Park, I was startled by hearing the cry of another but smaller pack of hounds, as I could distinguish them to be by the sound of their tongues. Shortly afterwards I saw a fox pass near me much distressed, and very soon the fatal "whoop" was heard. It afterwards appeared that this gentleman's brother had permission to try whether he could kill with his small pack a fox which had more than once beaten the

large one. The following season I was surprised one morning by hearing voices of some different men with hounds, drawing the wood in which I lay. I soon moved and went away from the wood, but was seen by men, who commenced hallooing, "Gone away!" The hounds were then hunting another fox in the wood, where they continued all day without killing him. At length I was found by them where there was no other fox. They pursued me for many miles in a most extraordinary way, and such good hunting hounds they were, that had I not gone down a road where a flock of sheep had just gone before, unknown to the huntsmen, I must have been killed. They there came to a check, and as it was contrary to Mr. Wyndham's system to assist his hounds by holding them forward, they never got near me again that day. It was very like the system described by our friend in the New Forest.

The following year I was again surprised by hearing the voice of another strange huntsman, before I knew that hounds were just coming into the wood. However, this notice was sufficient to prepare me for a start. Soon after I had moved from my kennel, a single hound threw his tongue. Mr. Smith gave a very loud cheer, and every

hound appeared at once to be running on the scent. This so frightened me that I lost no time in leaving the covert and taking my way straight to the forest, where other foxes were soon moved by hearing the hounds ; I escaped this time also. Not feeling however quite safe, I resorted to a plan which had been adopted by other foxes before. I contrived to crawl up the side of a large oak tree, by means of some small branches which grew out of its trunk near the bottom, and the stems of ivy which covered it farther up. At a considerable distance from the ground I found a desirable spot to rest upon, where the large branches, about which was a thick patch of the ivy, divided. To this place I resorted every morning for a long time, and thence could frequently see the horrible hounds, myself lying, as I fancied, in certain safety. One day, however, as I turned my head towards where they were hunting a fox in the wood close by, my attention was so riveted that I did not observe a keeper, who in passing the tree on the other side had seen me and was proceeding towards the hounds just at the moment the fatal " whoop ! " was heard,—the hounds having killed the unfortunate fox which they had been hunting.

Soon afterwards the keeper told Lady Elizabeth

Bruce where I was ; it was also communicated to Mr. Smith, who said, that although the hounds had had a hard day's work, the fox should be dislodged from his extraordinary situation if her ladyship wished to see it done. To my horror, the keeper brought the hounds straight to my tree and pointed to the spot where I lay as close as I could. As soon as they were taken away to a considerable distance and out of sight, the keeper was desired to climb up the tree and bring me down. The horror of my situation may be easily conceived as I heard him ascending. I did not move until I saw his hand close to me ; but as he was on the point of taking hold of me I sprang from my lofty nest. Fortunately dropping on some branches which projected about half way down, I broke the fall, which would have broken my neck, and fell to the ground, from which I rebounded, I think, some feet. Much shaken by the fall, but fortunately nothing worse, I soon was on my legs and away across the forest straight to the west woods, which were about three miles distant. When the hounds were only the distance of half a field they saw me enter this immense covert ; but, as several foxes were soon moving, I escaped ; and the hounds were kept running till





*F. Smith, Esq., del.*

THE CRAVEN HOUNDS IN SAVERNAKE FOREST.

*Facing page 58.*

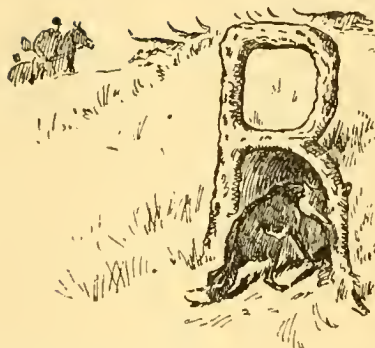




it was nearly dark. I have since heard that the height from which I sprang to the ground was afterwards measured to decide a bet, and that it was proved to be exactly twenty-seven feet. It was a strange adventure, but can be attested by many who saw it ; and with this I conclude my story.

Now for Northampton Pytchly. Thou art familiar with these things ; thou hast, no doubt. thy story by heart, and canst go a slapping pace.

## PYTCHLY'S STORY



ECOLLECT that when the pace is good it cannot last long, and so with my story, for I remember but little of my very early days. I have had the good luck to escape from

several packs of hounds which have hunted my country, and am now arrived at a venerable age ; indeed, so far advanced in my teens that I began to believe myself to be the oldest fox in the country, until I saw one who is fastened up by a chain in the back-yard of the Peacock Inn, at Kettering. Having been there ever since he was a cub, he is known to be eighteen years old, and he is now full one-fourth shorter than when in his prime of life. It is not likely that foxes often attain to such an age, as before that they become infirm ;

and in countries where there are hounds become an easy prey to them, and where there are no hounds they are killed by the gamekeepers.

The first pack of hounds by which I was hunted belonged to Mr. Osbaldiston, and a most trimming pack they were; but luckily for me, when they were going their best pace in pursuit of me, they sometimes overran the scent, owing to their great courage, which, in the breeding of them, seemed to have been more attended to than the nose. They sometimes ran away for a little while even from all the fast riders. These, however, generally contrived to get up again to them, especially when at a check; but every moment's delay made more clear to all the necessity of having best noses.

It may appear strange that I should have escaped from the different packs, since the Squire's <sup>1</sup> left, in so fine a country as this to which I belong, especially when such expense has been incurred to procure a strong pack on purpose to destroy us; but, luckily for us, the hunters fell into the mistake of trying to make what they called a flying pack, and to this end getting rid of all those which they called slow hounds, many of which were such as would not

<sup>1</sup> To Mr. Osbaldiston belonged, *par excellence*, the title of "the Squire."—ED.

go the pace without a good scent, as they would have them do. Such hounds were always drafted, although, when there was a good scent, this sort could puzzle even the fast riders to keep with them. Partly to this cause, then, I attribute my having lived to my great age. There are other reasons why fewer foxes are killed than formerly. In the first place, the country is overrun with drains, of which there are thousands unknown to the hunters, but known to us. When severely pressed by the hounds, I have often got into one of them, and it frequently happened to be in the middle of an open field, when hounds in chase of me have run over it, and owing to their mettle and to their being pressed by hard riders, they have been urged on beyond it, then held on forward in every way by the huntsman ; and if, after this, the drain has been discovered, the scent, owing to the time lost, has been nearly gone. The entrance to drains is generally in a low part of the land, which is chilled by water upon it, and therefore may not hold a scent to discover that we have gone into one.

During the time that that fine old sportsman, Lord Spencer, hunted this country, there were nothing like so many of these drains as there are now, which may in some measure account for fewer

foxes being killed at the present time than when Charles King hunted the hounds. I have heard my old granny say that the first thing his lordship thought of and wished to do, was to improve and strengthen his pack in every possible way. Of late, the pack has been thought to be of least consideration ; and it would seem by the system adopted, that a fox is to be run down by men who can ride fast, and that whippers-in are nearly all that is wanted. For instance, when I have been pursued by the hounds, if I have run towards or through any covert, I have frequently been astonished, after passing through it, and almost before the hounds had arrived at it, to see one of the whippers-in riding beyond it, in order to see me go away, which he rarely or never could do ; and if he did by accident get in time to see me at all, the consequence was, that when I saw him I went back again into the covert, and then, if there was any fresh fox or foxes in it, they were pretty sure to be changed and hunted, and I escaped. It generally happened that I had gone on through the covert before the whipper-in got round, in time to see, not me, but a fresh fox go away, to which he would probably halloo on the hounds, and, not knowing the difference, declare it was the hunted one.

I suppose you will now not wonder that I have lived to so great an age in this country. It is true I have had some narrow escapes within the last few seasons, particularly one in the year 1840, when I was found by the hounds then belonging to Mr. Smith, and in consequence of beating them, called the Hero of Waterloo. I attributed my escape to the system above described and adopted by the men on that occasion, when the hounds were hallooed on to a fresh fox, which the whipper-in Jones had viewed away on the farther side of Loalland Wood, at a time when the hounds were hunting my scent through it, I having gone through and away from it long before he got there. On looking back I witnessed, to my regret, Mr. Smith's displeasure at the system, which from that time he insisted should not be continued. However, I was, four days afterwards, lying in a small wood at Kelmarsh, when the hounds pursued a fox in full cry, and came straight towards where I lay. Just before they arrived I heard the following words addressed by Mr. Smith to his whipper-in: "Where are you riding to before the hounds, when they are running hard? Keep behind them in your place. If we cannot kill our fox without your acting thus, we had better have a pack of whippers-in, and no hounds at

all." I never heard of or saw the same system again.

Many other changes took place, which, as being unlike what we had been used to, were by no means agreeable to us. One of them was the former way of giving up hunting a fox and going to find another. On some occasions, when I have been found and hunted by the hounds, and fancied that I was safe, as I had done on previous occasions whenever I could not hear them, I was surprised to hear them, after a short time, again hunting on the line I had come. I was once found by the hounds in a covert close to Fox Hall, and after they had pursued me closely for a few miles, I, in consequence of there being a line of dry fallows, left them far behind ; so that I had given up all idea of being disturbed again by them that day, and stopped in Mr. Hope's plantation ; I had been but a short time there when they again approached, but slowly, and I heard the following words addressed to Mr. Smith, who was hunting his hounds : " How much longer shall you go on with this cold scent ? Don't you think you can find another fox ? " The reply was, " I shall hunt this as long as a hound will own the scent. We shall get up to him by and by, and kill him too."

On hearing this it was time to be off. I was



shortly after seen in the plantation, and hunted closely by the hounds, which, after another long check, again got on my scent in the wood where I was *first found*. They hunted me very fast across some of the finest grass country, and I was obliged to take refuge in a drain under a road leading to a field, where fortunately I found another fox, and succeeded in getting beyond him in his retreat. It often occurs that the fox which is hunted and frightened forces his way beyond the fresh one, and there remains during the operation of digging, and when the huntsmen come by, the fresh fox is drawn out and given to the hounds. Such was the case now, and so I escaped, for luckily it was getting late, and the hounds were taken away immediately without their discovering that I was left behind. I had time to remark that only one man, who was addressed as his Grace, was with the hounds at the finish, or indeed for a long time during the run, nearly all having left at the time of slow-hunting.

And now, my friends, I have done.

“Done ! Tell us first what has become of our friend old King Stumpy. There is a rumour that he is dead, and I do not perceive any one here without a brush.”

Alas ! he is no more. He was captured, and

massacred, and died an ignominious death. It happened last autumn that he was found as usual in Grafton Park one morning, as soon as it was light, by this new pack, when he had imprudently glutted himself, and was thinking again to save his life by immediately running into a drain, in which he had so often saved himself before after a severe day's hunting. He who had been king of the forest, and had for so many years fairly beaten his enemies, was now dug out and devoured by the hounds on the spot. Oh ! the ruthless and unfeeling beasts ! Yet, be it confessed, that we ourselves do sometimes dig out a mouse or so, but it is to eat him kindly, you know.

Here I intended to finish my story, but as I am expected to explain how I have escaped from every pack by which I have been hunted, I must add, that having for a long time had a wish to see that part of the Northampton country hunted till last year by the Duke of Grafton's hounds, in which the woods were of immense size, having heard that T. Carter and his killing pack had left the country, and thinking it would be a place of greater security for my old age, I went there last spring, but had not been long settled in Puckland's woods before I was disturbed by hearing another pack, which soon

found me out, and pursued me for some time most closely, till at length they came to a check. When listening, I heard a person ride up and use these words to the huntsman : " Well, what are you going to do now ? You had better be doing something ; it's no use standing still." There was some reply which I could not hear. However, I discovered that the man addressed was Taylor the huntsman, and that the pack was the remainder of that by which I had first been hunted when it belonged to Mr. Osbaldiston. The only difference I could observe was, that they were not quite so powerful. That they were stout enough I had reason to know ; for although I escaped after their hunting me for several hours in these large woods, they afterwards killed another fox without leaving the covert.

On another day, when I was lying in a large covert adjoining the Forest of Whittlebury, and the hounds had been drawing some distance beyond the spot where I lay, I thought that I could steal away unseen, and had nearly reached the outside of the wood when I was much annoyed by the noise of a jay, which kept flying above me as I went on. When I stopped I heard a man say, " There is a fox moving close to that jay, I'll be sworn ; just look, you will see him cross that path directly."

This talking frightened me from the spot, and on my going a little farther and crossing a path, another man exclaimed, "There he goes ! it was a fox that jay was making such a noise about." He then gave a loud view-halloo ; the hounds soon came up, and after running some time in the forest, I left them following another fox.

The little I had to say is said.

"Come, Dorset, fain would we hear thy story next. Our thoughts should be open as the heavens above, and free as the winds that follow us. We are brethren and fellows in our way of life, and thou may'st not doubt that we will judge thy deeds fairly but kindly."

"Justice, then, is fled to lowly beasts, for men have none of it. Listen to my story, friends ; a plain and unvarnished one it is, and you shall have it freely and entirely."

## DORSET'S STORY



WAS born in Cranborne Chace, which is in Mr. Farquharson's hunt, and it was here that I first heard the sound of a huntsman's voice, the voice of old Ben Jennings; and melodious as it might

have been considered by others, it was any thing but agreeable to my ear when he used it to cheer on his hounds, which appeared so well to understand it. It frequently was the cause of my leaving this large covert. I returned to it because the hounds were apt to get on the scent of another fox. The voice became at last so familiar to me that I heeded it not, but rather found amusement in it, taking little trouble to be out of hearing of it





GONE AWAY. BY HENRY AIKEN.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*





when the hounds were hunting me ; but another season came, and great was the difference. I lay in a favourite covert called Short Wood, when I was startled by another voice instead of old Ben's, that of the new huntsman, Treadwell's, clear and beautiful—not so powerful as that which I had been used to of late, nor was it *vox et præterea nihil* ; for his system was one which soon made me give up listening when the hounds were pursuing. I found that I had now no longer time to wait and hang about as I had done. I was obliged to get away as fast as I could, and had enough to do to escape from the new man, whose coolness and perseverance frightened me. My first escape was owing to an imperfect cast which he made when the hounds had come to a check in a field, where there was a flock of sheep, for instead of taking the hounds entirely round and close under the hedge, beginning at the left hand, he missed that corner for about fifty yards, where it happened that I had gone through the fence, and by the time he had taken them close all round every where else and held them on forward, time was lost, and the hounds got on the scent exactly opposite. Although it now became slow hunting, I did not feel safe until I heard him blow his horn

to go home. I believe that this kind of mistake, or rather neglect, has been frequent on the part of other huntsmen by whom I have been hunted. Be that as it may, one or two escapes from this able man and his pack were sufficient to induce me to get quickly into another hunt out of his way. Those escapes may be attributed to the want of scent, and they will not seem surprising, if the time be calculated which was lost at every check, whilst I was going on without listening as the hare always does. Having stopped some little time in a strong covert of gorse in an open down, in Mr. Drax's country, south of Blandford, and close adjoining to Lord Portman's, I was one morning annoyed by hearing the voice of Mr. Drax's huntsman, John Last, who was drawing the covert with his hounds, by which I was shortly after surrounded. Being ignorant of the runs and tracks in the gorse, I was so pressed by them that I sprung upon the top of the gorse, and ran along it for a few yards, but the halloeing of the hunters soon frightened me down again. At length I went straight away across the down in view of all the hunters, and had not gone more than a hundred yards before a large man on a heavy gray horse rode between me and the covert, and began halloeing in the most

frightful manner, at the same time waving his hat as if he was out of his mind : the consequence of which was, that the hounds, which were hunting me closely out of the covert, immediately they saw and heard him threw up their heads and ran wildly after him, expecting to see me, which fortunately they did not, as I had by that time just got beyond a small elevation in the down, which prevented the man also from seeing me. I turned directly to the left. He now found out the mischief he had done by causing the hounds to lift their heads, and galloped on still farther, hoping to get another view of me, but in vain, as I had sunk into a small valley, and he luckily turned the hounds in a direction opposite to that in which I had gone. The scene at this time defies description. "What are you at, you crazy old man? You have lost our fox!" and endless execrations were lavished on him. I believe this circumstance saved my life ; for had it not occurred, the hounds would have had me in view for three miles across the downs, and although it was some little time before they got on my scent again, they came after me at a most terrific pace, which fortunately, however, was slackened on their crossing the road and having to climb over a wall into the

grounds adjoining some immense woods, through the whole of which they hunted me again at a good pace, and straight on for nine or ten miles, till I was almost exhausted ; luckily they were stopped when crossing a field where there was a flock of sheep, no one being there to assist them. Shortly I heard in a loud voice, " John ! Where is John ? " and finding that they were not likely to get much assistance from the huntsman, I quietly retraced my steps towards the place from which I started, but remained there for a short time only.

I was again lying one morning in a piece of gorse near the Down House, when I was waked by hearing what I thought was the whistle of the keeper, but which turned out to be that of Lord Portman's huntsman, whose hounds were all around me before I was aware. The men on horseback were scattered in all directions over the down, and it would have served them right if they had lost their day's sport, which they very nearly did, as I stole away to a large rabbit earth close by, into which I ran.

Unluckily some of the hounds got on my scent and hunted it up to the earth, where they marked it by stopping and baying. Shortly after this two

or three of the hunters rode up, and I heard the following words : " Not worth saving : get him out and give him to the hounds ; he can't run a yard." However, it was decided that I should have a chance, as they called it ; and a pretty chance it was. I was dug out, put into a sack, and given to the whipper-in, with orders to turn me out on the down. Something was said about cutting my hamstrings, in order to lame me, and one wished to cut off my brush ; and that it was not done was a great disappointment to the wretch. I was turned out at only about a hundred yards from the pack, but contrived to reach a hedge just as one of the leading hounds had got close to me, when I turned short to the left down the narrow ditch. The hounds all sprang over the fence, and then, not seeing me there, fortunately turned first to the right ; and before they had found out that I had gone down the ditch I had got out on the other side again, and ran to a corner, when I turned through it again into another cross-hedge. By these means I got clear off before they had another sight of me, for they overran my line of scent a little when they got back on the down on my track. I well recollect hearing the huntsman calling loudly to the whipper-in to get on and

head the fox from going to the woods ; but he, poor thing, was in a state of too much excitement to understand what was meant, and even if he had understood, it would have been a fruitless attempt to stop me from making my point to reach a wood or place of safety on such an occasion, even if my first attempts had been prevented. I may flatter myself that a hundred witnesses are ready to pronounce it as clever an escape as was ever effected by a fox in similar circumstances. For the future they will not say that a fox cannot run, and condemn him to be given to the hounds, merely for running into an earth.

I now made the best of my way straight to the large woods which I had passed through when hunted by the other pack, and luckily made good use of my time, for they came after me as if their feet had been winged, neither road nor wall delaying them. I had enough to do to keep out of their way through these large woods, which they traversed nearly as fast as if in the open country. At the extremity of the woods, to my surprise, I met the noble master of the pack, who had succeeded in getting to that point before me, the result of which was that I turned back into the covert before he saw me, and caused a slight check, after which





BAGGING THE FOX. BY C. LORRAINE SMITH.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*





they again approached me, just as I had reached the wall which surrounded the wood, at the top of the hill looking into the vale, where I descended, and looking back saw the hounds for a short time again at a check, owing to that high ground being slightly covered with snow. I dreaded lest they should take the hounds on beyond the snow towards the vale where I was ; but they soon turned back, and I heard no more. It was nearly three o'clock, which some think time to go homeward rather than from home, as would have been the case if they had followed me, when probably I should not have lived to tell my tale. The scent in the vale is always so much greater than on the hills from which they had hunted me, that I must have fallen a prey to this pack. Although we are endowed with so large a share of wisdom, it is not all-sufficient ; or else we should be aware that when pursued by hounds and nearly beaten by them, it must be all but certain death to us to run from a bad scenting country into a good one.

Having now openly defeated the enemies who had conspired against me, I remained in the vale until I was tempted to move into a finer and fairer country. Great changes are going on in the hunting of the country which I left ; and should we

ever meet again there may be much for me to tell. For the present I have done.

“We now look to thee, Warwick, to give us something good ; thy country has produced one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived. He knew all the wiles of the wildest creature that walks the earth. Dost thou think that Shakespeare would have been a good huntsman ? ”

“By the faith of a fox I should have been most loath to try him. Did he possess the following qualities : boldness, perseverance, activity, enterprise, temper, and decision ? Had he a keen perception of relative place ? Had he a good eye and ear ? If he had all these, and more, then might Shakespeare have been an immortal fox-hunter.

“It is little that I have seen in this country, and I have little to tell ; but I will at once proceed and state to what cause I attribute my escape on one or two occasions lately.”



## WARWICK'S STORY

IN the month of March last I was lying in a strong gorse - covert, not far from Nuneham, when after hearing the voice of Stephens, the huntsman to the Atherstone<sup>1</sup> hounds, I heard the following remarks by one sportsman to another, both being on horseback and waiting close to where I was in my kennel.

“Well, I do hate that silent system; had Robert not been so sparing of his voice, or had he only given one blast of his horn when he began drawing the small spinney just now, the hounds

<sup>1</sup> Stephens was huntsman of the Warwickshire, not the Atherstone, pack.—Ed.

would not have chopped that vixen in cub ; for vixens in that state are unable to run far, and are unapt to move till pressed to do so by the approach of danger. She probably had been so much used to see the keeper and his dogs pass, that, not hearing the huntsman's voice or horn, she was taken by surprise when the hounds got round her ; if she had moved before, she might have been seen, and the hounds stopped in time to save her. No doubt she had been there some weeks before, and, in consequence of having a good friend at the great house not being ever disturbed, she believed that she was safe."

I would not venture to listen any longer, for I heard the same hounds running another fox in the gorse close by me. It appeared that there was also another besides, making altogether three of us. Finding this to be the case, and thinking to be very cunning, I took an early opportunity of quitting the covert ; and had scarcely got across two fields before I saw a multitude of men on horseback riding along the road in a parallel direction to that which I was going. They had seen me leave the covert without waiting for the hounds, which they ought to have known were running still after another fox ; however, when they found that the hounds were

not running after the same fox that they were themselves, they began hallooing, and the hounds were shortly afterwards brought and got on my scent. Of course I returned to the covert, for I had no notion of being thus hunted by men, and wished to let the gentlemen know that I would not go unless I chose to do so, let them halloo as they would. I therefore punished them by running for nearly three quarters of an hour longer in the covert. This brought them a little to their senses, and they gave me room to make another attempt. Not liking to remain in such close quarters with this sticking pack, I seized an opportunity, and went away on the side of the covert opposite to that which I had first attempted, and though I was viewed away by several men, it happened that they were able this time to hold their horses and their tongues until I had got fairly away, when they certainly did halloo, so that about half the pack came to them. The whipper-in was sent to stop them, and as soon as the huntsman had got a few more he also came to them ; but not having quite three parts of the pack he did not go on with them, but stopped and blew his horn for the others which he had left. Some of them shortly after came, but seeing him stopping where he was, did not appear to be in any haste,



possibly because they were aware that they had left a fox in the covert ; but, from his stopping, it might not have appeared to them that a fox had gone on, or they would not have taken it so leisurely.

To this, then, do I attribute my escape ; for, though they did hunt me for a mile or so, the time was lost, and so too, of course, the scent ; this, added to the impatience shown by the men who were out, settled the business for me. An accident which had lately occurred to Stephen, the huntsman, by which his foot was injured, prevented him, I conclude, from being every moment close to the hounds, when these men were so anxious to get on, and the huntsman's presence was so absolutely necessary to prevent their doing mischief. However, I had no reason to regret it, for I went straight across a fine country ; though it was reported that I had returned to the covert, which was not likely ; I may add, on this occasion, that I went to the coverts at Comb, to which place they also came to find another fox. They did not cross the line I had come, but passed through part of a large covert where I had stopped, without drawing it, expecting to find a fox at the other end of it.

Seeing this, I slipped back behind them, and was stealing away, as I thought undiscovered (no un-



HUNTING IN COVER. BY HENRY ALKEN, ENGRAVED BY T. SUTHERLAND.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*



common thing for me to do), unluckily, a man in a red coat had stopped back, as if on purpose to see any fox that might be left behind ; and as soon as I was out of sight he gave a loud view-halloo, by repeating which he brought the hounds after a short time on to the line of my scent. This caused me to lose no time, and having now a good start, I ran straight through all those large woods until I got to the end of that near the railway, when I turned to the right ; and after stopping in an outside covert for some time, thinking that I had escaped, I heard the hounds hunting very slowly, till they were quite silent. But I was soon after surprised to hear the huntsman taking them across the wood where I was, and instantly left it in a direction opposite to that where I had seen all the hunters ride ; consequently only a few followed with the hounds when they hunted me across the river and railway into the open, beyond Coventry. They ran me back to near the side of the river, when they were taken to the other side, which happening to be towards Leamington, I remained in that part, and had got so far as Ufton Wood. I was found there a few days afterwards by the new huntsman of the Warwickshire hounds and that pack. Having previously heard that they had learned much from Carter, the

Duke of Grafton's late huntsman, under whom he had been whipper-in, and that he had been doing much mischief amongst us, I lost no time in leaving this large covert, and was soon followed by the pack, which hunted me at a fair pace, until they had followed me part of the way across a dry fallow field. As my good luck would have it, there was also another fallow in the direction which I had gone, straight beyond. It seems that Stephen, the huntsman, made one or two casts with his hounds across each of these fallow fields without success. In his anxiety not to lose, I suppose he forgot that if the hounds could not hunt scent over one fallow they could not over another. He omitted to hold the hounds on and across the next field of wheat beyond it, and took them back towards the covert where I came from, and thus it was that I escaped; for after some remark was made to him on the subject, he directly took the hounds back to the field beyond the fallow; they there got on my line of scent, and after hunting slowly for a couple of miles, fortunately for me gave it up; otherwise, the line I had taken was so good that I might have fallen a victim to this persevering and promising young huntsman. After a little more experience he will be a dangerous enemy of ours.

“Now, Chester, tell us how they go on in thy part of the world, and how thou hast contrived to escape from that famous hunting pack of hounds, which we are told belonged to the late Mr. Codrington. Tell us, moreover, is it a good huntsman they have to hunt them ? ”





## CHESTER'S STORY

S foxes are scarce in our country, I alone could be found to travel here, and having been hunted only one season, I am, from my own experience, but ill qualified to reply to your question as to the huntsman. I have as yet escaped from being hunted by him, but I do hear that he is in all respects most excellent. Unfortunately for him, but fortunately for us, he was lately disabled by the fracture of a bone of his leg; and consequently could not come with the hounds when they hunted the last week in the Namptwich country. For reasons to be given hereafter, I had rarely lain in coverts of late, and had preferred lying in hedgerows. I happened, however, to be lying in a

covert one day when I heard the voice of a man who was hunting hounds which turned out to be Mr. White's, and as they were close to me before I heard them, my only chance was to leave the covert immediately ; but in the first field I was met by some men on horseback who frightened me back again. I was not seen by the hounds, which ran out of the wood on my scent as far as I had gone, but were turned back, not without a little loss of time, which was a favourable occurrence for me. I went straight through the wood and away on the opposite side, and soon found that they were after me. I kept on, but not in a straight line, which rather puzzled the gentleman who was hunting them. They came at length to a final check, and could hunt no farther. I thought that if Marden had been hunting them, there was one cast which he would have made, and that was to the left of the field where they lost the scent ; for although each of the other sides were tried by casting the hounds that way twice over, they were never taken once round beyond the field to the left ; and to this I attribute my escape, for I was nearly beaten, and it appeared that the pack which I found such difficulty in shaking off and defeating by turning so short as I had done during the

run, was that which belonged to the late Mr. Codrington. It is stated that they killed every fox that they hunted during eight following weeks. They are said not to be compared for beauty to the former pack, which is reported to have been a magnificent one ; but “ handsome is that handsome does.”

Now, my friends, I will tell you why I prefer hedgerows and out-of-the-way places to fix on for a kennel. Listen to a matter of fact, but a melancholy story of what took place in a part of the country where I was bred. It happened when in a favourite little covert near Namptwich that I was attracted by the scent of a bait which was placed under a large iron trap, carefully covered over with some light grass and moss ; on attempting to remove these I unfortunately struck the trap, which went off and caught me by the foot. Need I describe the agony I endured, confined as I was by the mangled foot ? Daylight appeared, when, nearly exhausted with pain, I made a desperate effort with my other forefoot, and succeeded in pulling out the peg that confined to the ground the chain of the trap, which I dragged away for some distance, I then lay down overcome with pain, and in this deplorable condition remained for two

or three days and nights. The foot being now as it were benumbed and almost insensible, I in order to save my life fairly bit it off with my teeth, and thus released myself from the trap. Not long after this had occurred a more tragical affair took place in this very same covert. In the early part of the month of March in the present year 1843, I was lying, as was my custom, in a thick and broad hedge, when late in the day I was much frightened by the approach of the hounds, passing near me rather quickly to my great relief, for it appeared that they had not found a fox all day. They immediately begun drawing the covert, and shortly afterwards a fox was seen with an iron trap fast to his foreleg, which was broken above the knee. In the course of a few minutes the fatal "whoop" was heard, the signal of his death.

During the tumult which ensued amongst the gentlemen who had been hunting, an honest farmer, whose land surrounded the covert, came up and stated that a short time before he had found in a field close by a large trap exactly of the same sort, which had in it two of a fox's toes. They belonged to the foot which I parted with myself. It is impossible to describe the sensation created by this additional circumstance; but it caused amongst

other remarks the following, which reached my ears :—" These acts of shocking cruelty were scarcely ever heard of in this part, till game became an article of traffic to the landlord, and shooting on his land began to be let to strangers who have no interest whatever in the welfare of the country where it lies. Nothing conduces to that welfare more than brilliant sport afforded by a pack of hounds ; as it leads others, as well as those who own estates, to become residents in the country. Noblemen and gentlemen have now lost their good old English feelings, and instead of inviting their friends for the sport, they let their shooting, or sell their game in the market. It frequently happens that the persons to whom the shooting is let are men who are engaged in business and reside in large towns. They are consequently ignorant of the tricks and cruelties of their keepers during their absence, and unaware of the disappointment these keepers create to hundreds of gentlemen who reside in the country, who keep large establishments of horses for the express purpose of hunting, and whose money might otherwise be spent in more questionable ways in town or elsewhere."

I have heard the following lines recited by one

who said that they ought to be put up over the mantelpiece of every farmer in the kingdom :—

Attend, ye farmers, to this tale,  
And when ye mend the broken rail,  
Reflect with pleasure on a sport  
That lures your landlord from the court,  
To dwell and spend his rents among  
The country folk from whom they sprung ;  
And should his steed with trampling feet  
Be urged aecross your tender wheat,  
*That steed*, perchance, *by you* was bred,  
And *yours the corn* by which he's fed,  
Ah ! then restrain your rising ire,  
Nor rashly curse the hunting squire.—WARBURTON.

“ So, Devonian, tell us thy history, for methinks  
'twill be something strange.”



## DEVONIAN'S STORY



Y story must needs be a short one. In my own country I am called "The Bold Dragoon," and as every name either has or ought to have a particular meaning, I am so called in consequence of having

once been in the possession of a certain captain of dragoons who lived in the far West. These are my facts. I was born and bred in a wild part of Devonshire, and when a year old fell into the possession of a keeper. To state exactly how such a thing happened might sometimes be inconvenient, as in hunting countries a man scarcely dares to confess the crime of capturing a fox, for lucre at least. But here the keeper, thinking me remarkable for

size and strength, carried me to Captain T—,<sup>1</sup> who sent me off immediately as a present to Mr. G. Templar, the master of a pack of small fox-hounds at Stover in Devonshire, and I was carried into a dark and gloomy place, which had been at first intended for a large stable, and was above seventy feet in length, and nearly the same in breadth. Here I was let loose, and looking about me in my fright, what should I see but at least twenty other foxes, all coiled up in the snug holes which they had made for themselves. Besides these there were others out of sight. They all took much care to hide themselves when any man came in. As soon as he who had brought me there had left the place, they all came round me. I soon learnt for what purpose I was brought hither, for it appeared that each of them had been separately hunted by this gentleman's hounds, which he had brought under such command, that they scarcely ever killed the fox they hunted; for when hunting up to him, if a rider was near enough to make his voice heard, and he rated or spoke to them, they would only bay at him till he was again captured, placed in a bag, and carried home again.

It rarely happened that not the master nor

<sup>1</sup> Captain Trelawney.—Ed.

hunter, nor the reverend friend who called himself first whipper-in, were up at the time, as they were generally mounted on thorough-bred horses, which they well knew how to ride. For myself, it is a well-known fact that I have been turned out and hunted by these hounds eighteen times, though I have striven hard to get away. On no occasion was I injured by the hounds, and I must do my possessor justice by stating that he thoroughly understands the nature of all the animals that he had to manage.

The extraordinary distance which we ran, when hunted by these hounds, may be attributed to our perfect ignorance of the country where we were turned out, which also accounts for our not oftener running at once to the impracticable parts which abound here, and in which no horses could have followed the hounds. In consequence of our knowing none of the coverts, we often ran straight across Dartmoor, where the scent was so good that the pace at which we were followed by the hounds made it often most severe work for us; and it became almost a relief to be taken up and replaced in the bag, which was carried for that purpose, and reconveyed to our gloomy prison, where we were well supplied with rabbits and other food.

The various habits of our race were most apparent. Some would keep quiet in their kennels, which were holes made by them in the ground, or where loose stones had been removed from the bottom of the wall which surrounded our prison, watching what was going on ; whilst others were constantly moving about, as if in search of some outlet for escape. One, whose activity was extraordinary, had chosen for his place of rest a hole in the wall, being the opening intended for a window, which had been stopped up on the outside. It was full eight feet from the ground, and it was surprising, even to us, to see him run, with the greatest ease, up the perpendicular wall, as he daily did, aided by the roughness of the surface alone.

It now remains for me to explain how I am here and at liberty. We were one day surprised by the entrance of our feeder, who brought in several hampers, in which we were all taken to be turned out in the adjoining woods, there to shift for ourselves.

So you see that although I cannot boast of having beaten a pack of hounds, according to the tenor of the invitation, I have run away from them altogether, and am here to do you service by proving the error of the arch enemy, in thinking it

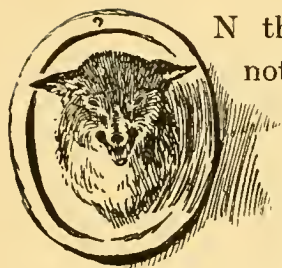
absolutely necessary for his hounds to devour the animal they have been hunting, that their ardour in the chase may be increased. I have been sorely hunted by them, my friends, and not until they had won the day, and run up to their object, did they relax—not till then were they satisfied.

Again I would ask, why should our enemy wish to slaughter us when seeking refuge in an earth, up to which his hounds have hunted ? seeing that those hounds so plainly show their contentment with having succeeded, and done all that was required of them.

*All.* “Bravo ! bravo ! well said, thou bold Dragoon !”

“Now, Berkshire, we pray thee tell us whether thou dost like a royal neighbourhood ; whether thou art safer, and whether thy treatment there is preferable to our own. Tell us all that thou canst, as thou livest nearer to those parts than most of us do.”

## BERKSHIRE'S STORY



IN that score, my friends, I have not much to boast of ; but having heard that the fair Queen had taken to herself a consort who rejoiced in the chase, I resolved to visit the royal forest. Soon I found that foxes here existed only in name. Some day in December I was lying in Windsor Forest about three o'clock in the afternoon, when I was disturbed by the voice of Sir J. Cope's huntsman, Shirley, who was taking the hounds through the forest to find a fox. Though so late, he was most persevering, and appeared determined to learn whether or not within the purlicus of the forest there was a fox left alive by the keepers. Seeing this, I lost no time ; but when stealing away was viewed by some of the hunters. The hounds soon followed me, and though it was a bad scenting day, I narrowly



escaped. I saw enough of them to convince me that they were not to be trifled with, and that a tolerable scent would tax all my powers to beat them.

It was some years ago that I was lying in a covert at Billingbeare, when I was startled by Shirley's voice. I soon got away from the covert, thinking that I was not seen, but I was mistaken. A view-halloo was given, and the hounds were soon on my scent. I went the best pace I could straight towards and through the large woods at Shottesbrook, and onwards in the direction of Maidenhead thicket, where I passed through the middle of a small village. As the hounds had not been seen or heard, no one was looking out, and consequently no one saw me, although I passed through a cottage garden ; and it behoves me to state that I probably owed my safety to nothing more dignified than a pig-sty attached to that garden, and which neutralised the scent ; for the hounds soon afterwards hunting so far, were unable to hunt farther. It was supposed by the huntsman that I had taken refuge in some of the buildings, and a search was made ; when a sportsman who was present expressed his surprise to a gentleman well-known in the hunt that they did not first hold on the hounds beyond

the village, and make that good first ; they would then have seen whether I had gone on or not, and if not it would have been time to come back and try all those places. This hint was taken, but too late to gain by it, for the scent, which the hounds had got on again, was now so cold that they could hunt me but slowly, instead of going at the pace they had hitherto gone, and which must have been the death of me had it been continued but a short time longer. I went straight on for several miles, until I reached the Thames near Cookham. I did not like to cross it, and returned to Bisham Wood ; by which time, owing to my stopping about in a part of the wood, the hounds had got very near to me, when it luckily grew nearly dark ; and though I was seen by them at not more than five hundred yards' distance, they were stopped and taken home, and I narrowly escaped from one of the most dashing packs in the kingdom. It is to be hoped by us in this part that his Royal Highness Prince Albert will have his commands obeyed by the keepers in Windsor Forest, and that this pack of hounds will not be driven elsewhere to find a fox. I now remained for a short time in a very thick covert, called Pigeon-House Coppice, through which I passed when hunted by the hounds.

There is a tragical story connected with this covert. The hounds many years since had met, and the gentlemen were all assembled, when the keeper who had the care of the coverts made his appearance, and producing a sack in which there was a fox, told them that unless they gave him a certain sum of money for it to turn out and hunt, he would shoot him before their eyes. This atrocious threat made them all quite furious, and they refused to give him anything ; on which this monster in the shape of man immediately laid the sack which contained the fox on the ground, and according to his threat shot him dead. The rage which was felt by all present it is impossible to describe. They did not put him in his own sack and throw him into a pond close by ; but he was soundly horsewhipped and instantly discharged from his place.

A much better feeling towards us now exists in this part of the country, and I have no longer a dread of being shot. But it is my intention to return to my old country, near Billingbeare and Shottesbrook, as I hear that the keepers there receive strict orders never to destroy one of us. This is the more handsome on the part of the occupier of the latter place, as he is not a fox-hunter

himself. No doubt I shall be suffered to lie in the coverts of the former, though I find much of my food at Shottesbrook, where the coverts are so thin and hollow that I could not remain there during the day without many chances of being disturbed by the keeper's dogs. I hope at some future time to be able to tell you that the breed of foxes in those parts, and in the royal purlieus, has so increased that it has been unnecessary for me to risk my life very often with Sir J. Cope's fine pack of hounds. It is reported that he intends to pay more frequent visits to these parts in future, in consequence of having given up the distant part of the country.

“And now, Sandy, tell us what is going on north of Tweed. Be there any hounds there? It is reported that foxes there are shot like rabbits. The mountains, it seems, are not to be rode over, and so no fox-hunting; is it so?”

## SANDY'S STORY



LET me at once undeceive you upon one point. It is not the mountains there, but the hounds, that are hard to be rode over, and that on account of the scent. We have, however, noble lords and others who can and do keep with the hounds, except on the steepest parts of the Cheviots. In the next place, let me pray of you not to believe the slanderers who say that we are so unmercifully slaughtered. No, my friends, it is not so. We have patrons as good as, if not better, than you have in the South. One gentleman alone has lately raised, at his own expense, for our sole use, a series of coverts, which was the only thing required, as both sides of Tweed, Berwickshire,

and Northumberland are as fine country as can be desired, and, unfortunately for us, as good scenting as any in the kingdom.

It is supposed that when people can fly thither by steam, it will become the Melton of the North ; but I hope the idea will end, as it began, in smoke. You, my southern friends, appear to think that we do not go the very fast pace that you do, and that the hounds by which we are hunted are not equally as good as those in your country ; but in this, too, you are much mistaken. So good is the scent there that, if it were not for the drains, which are now so general in the cultivated parts, the hounds, at the awful pace they go, would in a very short time kill nearly every one of us. Then the huntsmen are not to be despised ; on the contrary, we have to contend with one who, with the following qualifications, is near perfection,—the eye of an eagle, fine temper, boldness, enterprise, coolness, perseverance, intelligence, and, above all, decision. This is the rare man with whom, and with whose pack, we have to contend. I am proud to say that I have been hunted by, and escaped from him, on a good scenting day too, by taking refuge in the crevice of a rock, after one of the fastest runs possible for five miles. It began thus :—One



morning early last season, when lying in a covert called Bushen Glen, I was startled by hearing a man riding quickly by. He then suddenly stopped and addressed these few words to the whipper-in, who brought the hounds.

“How long have you been here?”

“Just come, my lord.”

“Is Mr. Smith here?”

“Not yet, my lord.”

“Well, I never was so thoroughly drenched; never rode twenty-four miles in such a deluge; so, by Jove, I can’t wait. Give me my horse.”

No sooner done, than “Cover hoick!” reached my astonished ears, and I instantly left my kennel prepared for a start. In a few minutes I was stealing away, and after clearing the wall and running in the open moor, I passed near the gentleman, I suppose, who was expected, and who, on seeing me, said not a word. I therefore, thinking I was unseen, did not turn back to the covert, but, laying my ears well back on my poll, took straight away across the moor, and just had a glimpse of the hounds and their noble huntsman, Lord Elcho,<sup>1</sup> topping the wall at the same time. My flight,

<sup>1</sup> Father of the present Earl of Wemyss. He continued to hunt this country till about 1868.

however, was too rapid to allow time for much curiosity. This was enough to make me go my best pace straight across the moor for four miles, and then a mile or two beyond, over fields, till I reached a hanging covert on a steep by the side of the Whitadder River, at which time the hounds were not more than four hundred yards from me. Although they did not see me, they ran the whole way as if they really did.

Here, although there was soon another fox or two moving, they still went on with my scent ; for with the most unerring judgment this huntsman kept the pack from changing, till at length I crossed the river and over the moor on the other side to a place of refuge, a crevice in a rock, for I could not go farther. The gentlemen rode up, and I heard these words : “ Well, I never saw a finer run. During the first four miles the tail hounds never got to the head at all, though not one hundred yards behind those that were leading when they first started.”

On other occasions I have saved my life in a similar way, but a circumstance occurred which almost made me resolve never again to resort to a drain. I was one night crossing a farm, not many miles from Dunse, when I heard cries as of a fox in

distress, and on going to the spot whence the noise proceeded I discovered that two of my brethren were confined in a stone drain, where they had been several days without food, and were nearly starved. I used every exertion in my power to scratch away the stones which had been placed to stop up the entrance, in order to prevent a fox going into it, as Lord Elcho's hounds were to meet near it next day. Fortunately Mr. Wilson, the owner of the land, passed that way and saw that the ground and stones had been lately disturbed by me, when he removed them, and saw the two foxes, one of which was found dead shortly after. He ascertained that his man had stopped them in nine days before, and that he forgot to open the drain again.

I once crossed the Tweed at a dangerous part, thinking that I should, by so doing, leave the hounds and all behind. Not so ; for the huntsman was not to be stopped, but swam his horse, as two or three others did, across the river, Treadwell, Mr. Robertson's <sup>1</sup> huntsman, taking the lead. Having thus crossed the river without gaining my point, and running in a ring of several miles, I recrossed the river at a spot where it was impossible for

<sup>1</sup> The late Mr. Robertson of Ladykirk.—Ed.

horses to cross ; so that, being a long way round, the hounds were stopped, and it was agreed that I was drowned in the Tweed.

Having seen some part of the country on the English side of the Tweed, I determined to cross back to it ; and after being there a short time only, and lying in a field of large turnips, not uncommon in this part, I was awakened by hearing a loud voice : "Treadwell, I wish you would draw the hounds through this turnip field. It is a very likely place to find a fox." This order was obeyed with the utmost silence ; but fortunately, having had the previous notice, I was off and away as fast as my legs could carry me, and was not seen, owing to the height of the turnips, until I reached the next field. The hounds soon got on my scent, and pursued me closely for about twenty-five minutes, so extremely fast, that I began to think I had changed my country for the worse.

Independently of their great speed, I could not hear them, as I did those by which I had been hunted on the other side of Tweed. I reached in safety a small covert, in passing through which it appeared that the hounds got on the scent of another fox, which turned out to be a cub, and so I escaped ; for although an old sportsman saw

me after I left the covert going apparently much distressed, and evidently the hunted fox, yet the hounds were not allowed to be taken from that which they were running, which it appeared they some time afterwards killed, scarcely having left the covert.

I had one or two more escapes from this determined huntsman and his killing pack, which escapes I attributed to my good luck in having been hunted by them on bad scenting days, and also in taking refuge in drains. Learning that many of my friends had been killed by them, I was induced to move into Roxburghshire, the country hunted by the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds, and adjoining the two hunts before described to you. There I had not been long before I was found in a small covert by the Duke's pack, as Williamson the huntsman<sup>1</sup> calls it, though he seems to do just what he likes with it. Be that as it may, he knew pretty well where to find me, and it was done in a few minutes. The hills form a part of the country that he surpasses most men in riding across ; and after running over them for some time towards the Cheviots, the blue tops of which seemed at the time to be higher

<sup>1</sup> Williamson was pensioned off in 1865 and died a year or two later. Shore, who succeeded him, still carries the horn.—ED.





THE DEATH OF THE FOX. BY R. B. DAVIS, ENGRAVED BY T. SUTHERLAND.  
*Lent by Basil Dighton.*





than the clouds, the hounds came to a check, owing as it was thought, to my having overtaken some cattle, and to too much delay in holding on the hounds ; and I escaped.

It appeared to me that these hounds had at the time rather too much flesh, though shortly afterwards the fault was mended ; for I never was pressed more by any pack in my life. Every hound seemed to go as if he had the leading scent. All came nearly abreast for several fields, and they were close to me when I again took refuge in a drain. The extraordinary scent just described induces me to relate the events of that day from the beginning. A remark was made before the hounds had thrown off, by an old sportsman, as follows. It happened that several coverts were drawn by the hounds without their finding a fox, although it was notorious that foxes had been on every former day most abundant there ; on hearing this the gentleman said, " I have often observed that on good scenting days foxes are not to be found, even where they are known to abound as they do here."

" How do you account for that ? " was asked.

" Probably on these good scenting days foxes lie under ground, or in places not disturbed by

hounds, for as they live by the use of their noses, they cannot but know their danger of being hunted on such days."

The hounds were taken on some distance towards another covert, but on passing by a small piece of gorse, not half an acre across, they were taken quietly to it, and in a short time killed a fox which had not moved from his kennel. This created some amusement at the expense of the gentleman who had stated his belief that it was a good scenting day, and some one said—

"Now, what do you think?"

"Why, that I am now more sure of it: for if this fox had moved under the circumstances when the hounds were so close to him, the scent being a good one, would have made it almost certain death; and so his best chance of escape was to lie still; but he has been too cunning."

Rather more than the hallooing usual when a dead fox is given to hounds took place; and the three men appeared to be trying who could oftenest repeat, "Tally-ho!" The hounds were again taken on towards the next large covert, and no sooner were they in it than they all threw their tongues and ran as if close to a fox, which was not the case, for it happened to be my own scent, and I

having heard the dreadful hallooing before described, and knowing it to be a good scenting day, had moved away some time before the hounds had reached the covert, although the crash they made there seemed as if close to me. I then ran as described before, straight to a drain about three or four miles off ; but although I had so good a start they nearly overtook me before I reached it. Waiting near the entrance I overheard the following remarks :—

“How very unlucky, just as the hounds were running into him. Such a swift pace they came, he could not have stood it five minutes longer.” I then distinctly heard the gentleman alluded to before exclaim, “Well ! I shall not be surprised if there are half a dozen foxes in this drain ; somewhere they must be.”

Then another voice, “Well, Will, what do you think now of Mr. Smith’s foresay as to its being a good scenting day ? ”

“My lord, he was right ; I never in all my life saw the hounds run so fast—faster they could not go.” He suddenly turned towards the man who ought to have stopped the drain. “Hoot, mon, how is this ? The earth’s open at yer vary ain door ? ”

“ Will, where’s the terrier ? ”

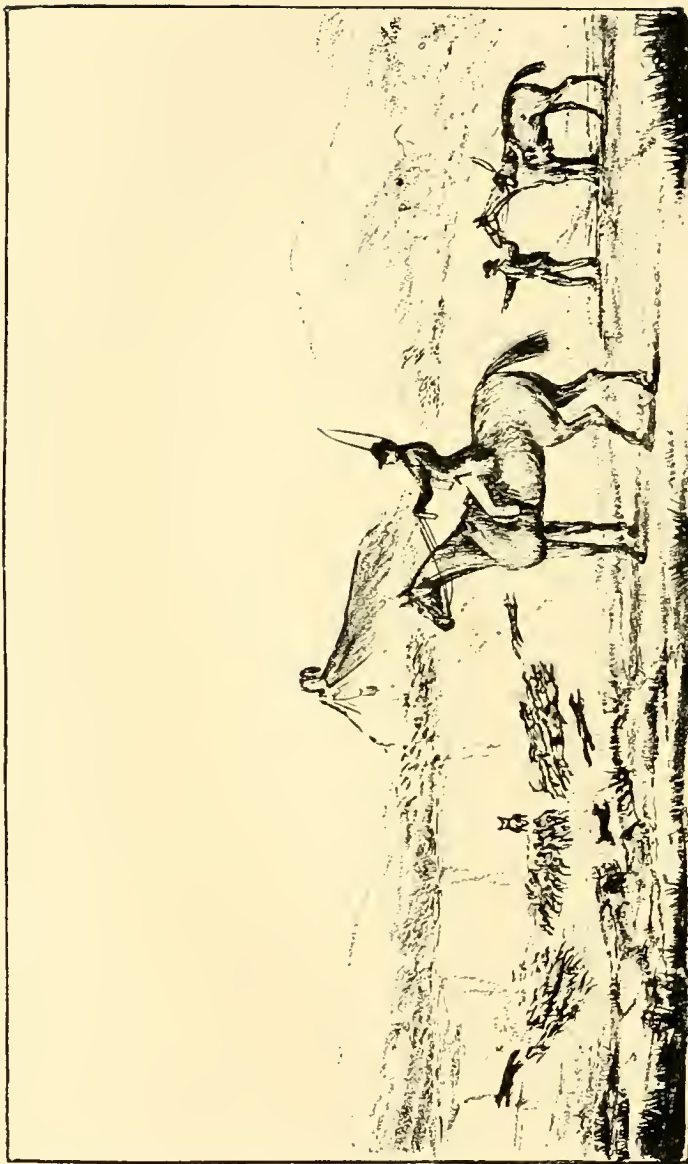
“ Got none, my lord.”

“ Was ever the like ? Seventeen years I have hunted with these hounds, and though every field in this country is full of drains, they have never had a terrier that was worth hanging. Jack, go and fetch the farmer’s terrier ; be off like a shot ! How can they expect to save their poultry if they do not put gratings to their drains ? Without them it is impossible for hounds to kill their foxes.”

Having by this time recovered my breath, I began to move away from the entrance, when to my surprise I found that there were no less than three foxes in the drain beside myself. Having with great difficulty forced myself past the first I came against, and whilst waiting anxiously the result, we were all much frightened by suddenly seeing a glimpse of light some distance up the drain beyond us. The men had dug a hole through the top of the drain at that spot ; and shortly after this we heard them trying to force a rough terrier of the real Makerston breed to enter ; they at length succeeded, when he immediately came down straight towards us. Not a little alarmed, and each of us struggling and striving to get away first, out we







*T. Smith, Esq., del.*

“EVERY HOUND HAS GOT A FOX.”

*page 113.*

all bolted, with the terrier close at our heels. The scene which followed it is almost impossible to describe. The first fox was pursued by the greatest number of hounds, and, as I came second, the next greatest number followed me ; and so after us they came ; but our sally was so sudden that we fortunately had gained the start of them by some ten or twenty yards.

I think I still hear the voice of old Will crying out, " Every hound has got a fox ! " As I jumped over the fence, he was still holding his whip in the air, undecided which of the four lots (into which the hounds had divided) he should follow. So good was the scent on that day, that although only about four couples of hounds followed me, I went straight to another drain ; and, strange to say, there found another of the same party as before, which accounted for the two first lots of hounds leaving a short time before they ran up to the earth. Here our lives were again in danger ; and, hearing the men again digging at some distance, I profited by what had passed, and pushed beyond it. My unfortunate fellow was again forced out by the same terrier, and fell a victim to our foes ; who, not suspecting that another fox was in the earth, again left me.

“ Well, Will, do you recollect the foresay about there being half a dozen foxes in the last drain ? ”

“ I do, my lord ; and now the gentleman’s fore-says have all been fulfilled from beginning to end.”

During the time they were waiting for the terrier at the last drain, and doubting whether he could be found, a farmer was filling in the stones at the entrance of the drain, and being asked what he was about, he answered,—“ Why, if the terrier don’t come, we will starve the fox to death, which is easy to do in this drain. He has had mony fowls ; about forty I ken.”

“ What’s that ? ” said the Southron. “ Pretty sort of encouragement for a gentleman to spend so much money in the country in keeping hounds. Why, the Duke pays more money to the farmers in one week than all the poultry in the hunt would sell for in a twelvemonth ; to say nothing of all that is spent in it by the gentlemen who hunt. If there were no foxes there would be no hounds.”

“ Vary true, vary true,” was the reply ; “ but Mr. Williamson is raather too closefisted when he pays a bittie o’ the Duke’s siller.”

The worst part of the story, as relates to ourselves, remains to be told, namely, that when they left a hard bargain was going on for the purchase of

the terrier which had driven us out of our retreat, and he was to be taken to the kennel for the same employment when required, which, sure enough, was often the case. Luckily for me he was not with the hounds a short time after, when I was again found by this pack, as I lay in a wood near Floors, belonging to the Duke of Roxburgh, who, though no fox-hunter, is one of our best friends, and gives his keepers strict orders never to destroy us. But for the absence of this terrier I must have been in jeopardy that day; for having heard the hounds running after another fox, I was just stepping away to a drain close to the Tweed, in a contrary direction, not before I was seen, and a few hounds got on my scent, which they followed until they reached the drain where I was. On being told of which, old Will, the huntsman, brought the rest of the hounds to the spot, determined to get me out. Tools were procured, and several attempts were made, but in vain. Some half-bred terriers were then sent for, but they would not venture near me, nor could they a second time be urged to go in. Other fruitless attempts were made, and a great part of the morning was lost in this way by a throng of hunters, and amongst them the noble master of the pack. Whilst this was

going on, and they were looking at and admiring the beauties of the stately river, a large salmon leaped clean out of the water, as if on purpose to amuse or to tantalise them. Whereupon a gentleman present asked his Grace if it would give him pleasure to have a throw with a fly for such a fish. His fit reply might well be a source of satisfaction and pleasure to all who hunt in countries where his Grace has property.

“To tell the truth I care little for that kind of sport; but, as to the other, I am never perfectly happy unless I have on a red coat.”

All at length left the place exceedingly annoyed that the terrier, the hero of the former day, had not been with them. Probably the bargain for him was not completed, and consequently I escaped.

Wishing to return to my old haunts, I had got as far as a covert called the Hirscl, belonging to Lord Home, where I had not been long when one day I heard two reports, which turned out to be from the keeper's gun, discharged at two innocent young fox-hound puppies, thus deliberately butchered for having strayed by chance from the hospitable home of the kind mistress whose pets they were, and whose gentle care and caresses they had so often enjoyed. You will not be surprised

when I tell you that our race appears to be almost extinct about these woods.

After this tragical event I lost no time, but went to the farthest covert belonging to this estate, and nearly surrounded by Lord Elcho's country. I hoped to be there as far as possible from danger, and thought myself secure, as the outside covert was kept quiet, and scarcely disturbed even by the hounds of the Duke in whose hunt it is retained. It is suspected that the keeper kills all of us foxes that he can in that part, because no hounds hunt it enough. He says that all the foxes in Lord Elcho's country come there to be quiet. Be that as it may, the last time the hounds found me there they had before drawn all the other woods, and only found one fox, and that a mangy one. I was disturbed first by hearing Old Will cheering his hounds, as if he had just seen a fox, giving his cheer thus, "Hooi-here, here, here!" which, in any other country, would pass for a view-halloo.

After listening and expecting to hear the hounds in full cry, I found it was only his customary cry in drawing a whin covert, particularly when he wished his hounds to get into it. I noticed that they did not attend to the halloo so readily when a fox was really seen. Notwithstanding this, they understood



their huntsman's system well enough to make it no safe thing to be hunted by them. I soon left the covert, and when they had pursued me for some miles, and were getting nearer to me, they suddenly came to a check ; on looking back, I saw the huntsman almost immediately take them away beyond the next large field, rather to the left of where my line was hitherto pointing ; I suppose either because there was a flock of sheep in that field, or because he thought I had gone to a covert in that direction. If the hounds had had their time, they would have hit off the scent to the right of the field. The upshot was, that I, thinking that they had given me up, took the first opportunity of getting out of sight, not because I was tired and beaten, as some suppose must always be the case when we seek such places of refuge ; which they soon ascertained was the case, for nearly as soon as the hounds had hunted up to the drain on one side of the road, I started off on the other, and though they had as good a start with me as they could wish for, I contrived to run away from them, owing to the scent not being good enough for hounds to kill a stout fox without assistance ; and probably to the huntsman repeating his former mistake in making an injudicious forward cast

when not wanted. He did not now venture to hold the hounds forward and across the line I came, or else they would have got on the scent, as I returned nearly the same way, which was ascertained by a hunter on his return home, a man having seen me.

Having escaped from this lively pack of hounds, I did not venture to remain in this part, but at once took up my abode near Foulden, where I was again found by Lord Elcho and his pack, though I fancied I had selected an out-of-the-way spot near the river Whitadder, with which part I was well acquainted, as his lordship has reason to know and to regret. After they had hunted me some time, finding myself distressed, I was induced to return to my old haunts, creeping along a narrow track by the side of the steep and rocky bank which overhung the river, the height of which, where I passed, was nearly a hundred feet. Several of these high-couraged hounds in attempting to follow me lost their footing, fell to the bottom, and were killed. It was only strange that a single hound escaped ; and though I certainly did not intend to assist in preventing their destruction, yet such happened to be the case ; for having waited, when in my narrow track, for some time, and thinking myself safe, I

heard the piercing cry of a hound, which I then believed was following me. I ran straight along the top of the precipice, and was seen by the whipper-in and some of the hounds, and the noise they instantly made by hallooing a view with all their might, assisted by his lordship blowing his horn, attracted the notice of the other hounds, or they would otherwise have followed on the line to certain destruction. I attribute my escape to the powerful effect this event had on the feelings of the owner of the pack. Lest I should again lead them back to the same spot, he immediately took them off my scent and sent them home, and I flattered myself that we should never again see these hounds run to find a fox in this part of the country; for the anguish created in his lordship's mind it is impossible for me to describe, although it may be easily imagined.

However, all my hopes of living a quiet life here were destroyed. A great friend of his Lordship's, and of ours, Mr. Wilkie of Foulden, near where this occurred, and on whose rabbits I sometimes subsisted, immediately took measures to prevent the same calamity from happening again; and although it was hitherto pronounced an impossibility, he has, as far as I at present can judge of it,

succeeded. It was managed by cutting away my narrow track at the edge of the rock which overhung the river. To do this required much labour and risk ; but it was effected by suspending a ladder, which was fastened by strong ropes to stakes driven in the ground some distance above. I need not say that I watched the work with no great satisfaction ; and as I saw the foundation of my once favourite track fall into the river below, when they gradually broke it away, it made my heart ache, I felt that I must now either stay and be killed, or move into another country. I decided on the latter.

Although I vowed in an hour of distress, when first hunted by the hounds there, never to run the risk of them again if I escaped, I recrossed the Tweed into England, and have taken up my quarters on one of the highest parts of the Cheviot Hills, hoping to find a safe retreat from them. There are, however, dangers to be dreaded there, as well as in every country where hounds are not kept to hunt us ; but the system of destruction to be dreaded by me is one that is adopted on mountainous parts alone. The shepherds of the mountains on certain days gather together against us, armed with guns, and aided by dogs of all sorts, from the greyhound to the collie. The sagacity and docility of the latter

are very astonishing ; but the sagacity of an old dog of the fox-hound sort is superior to that of every other. The collie dog is taught by man what to do, whilst the old fox-hound teaches his master. Had it not been for the sagacity of the hound, I should have been spared many a perilous run. The shepherds pretend that the breed of the mountain fox is of a different kind from our own, and that the head of the male is larger. For my own part, I believe the animals to be of the same kind as ourselves, and to be merely larger altogether ; for I have sometimes met one in my rambles. Their superior size may be accounted for as follows : having been born or bred in the wholesome air upon the mountains, where food, such as rabbits, is probably scarce, they find and fatten upon sheep which from various accidents die there. Having once got a taste for such food, it is not surprising that they will take a lamb, or attack an old one which has fallen through illness or neglect. Anxious as I am to protect my own race, I cannot blame the shepherds for waging war against the transgressors ; as it is known that when once a fox has taken to such a habit, he seldom gives it up but with his life. Felons are to be found everywhere ; but, as to ourselves, the following facts will prove that the generality of us are not guilty

of charges frequently laid upon us. On the first day of February last, being the last day of pheasant shooting, I was lying in a thick plantation, in the middle of a park at Ladykirk, on the other side of the Tweed, which covered a space of ground not more than a quarter of an acre, when a party were shooting not far off, and I suddenly heard one of them exclaim, "Look out, there goes a fox! he jumped up close by me. There he goes, straight away. I wish the hounds were here."

In the course of an hour after this, I was again startled by hearing, "Tally-ho! tally-ho! there goes another fox! Don't mistake him for a hare, and shoot him; he's close to you, in the clump between!" And then again the same loud voice,— "There he goes, right across the park; what a fine fellow he is!"

It shortly afterwards became my turn to exhibit. They came to the clump where I was, and a man who went in beyond directly called out, "There goes a hen pheasant, there go two, three!" and so on. He had just cried out, "That makes thirteen hen pheasants!" when a spaniel rushed into the thick bushes, and obliged me to face the whole party. A glorious cheering they gave me; and when they had expressed their surprise and satisfac-



tion, the keeper assured them of his belief, that there were as many pheasants left as had been there at the beginning of the season, excepting those that had been shot by sportsmen. Now if I, or any of us, were so much given to destroy game as we are reported to be, there would not have been a pheasant left alive in a week's time from the beginning of the season, whereas it was now nearly the end of it. This fortunately occurred in the presence of several persons, who saw all three of us. No less than five other foxes from the same park have been killed by Lord Elcho and his pack this season.

Hoping that I have given you all sufficient encouragement to induce you to make us a visit in the north, I conclude my story.

## CONCLUSION

ONE more friend was about to begin his story. Whether he was from York, Lincoln, Nottingham, or Bedfordshire, was not ascertained, for on a sudden we were startled by the cawing of an old crow and the screams of a jay, which, added to the chatterings of a couple of magpies, warned us that daylight was appearing; and I was reluctantly obliged to request that his story might be deferred to some future time, should we ever meet again, when we might all have more to relate concerning the inexhaustible subject of our lives. Chanticleer now clapped admiring wings, and sang out a loud applause. This excited the particular notice of one of our party, who exclaimed, "I'll go round and have a sly bite at his tail, for 'tis a quiet retired place, and no one yet about."

"Take heed," said I, "that thou bring us not into trouble."

Soon afterwards we were again interrupted by

the clamour of those tell-tale birds ; for it seems that our friend was returning without his intended booty, having been seen by the keeper, who fast approached towards us. Therefore, hastily bidding adieu until we should meet again, we all returned to our favourite coverts.

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